

THE LINEN CLOAK

By Victor Stafford Reid

AT LAST PAGE.

And there followed him a certain young man having a linen cloak cast about his body; and the young men laid hold on him; and he left the linen cloak and fled from them ...

THE BOOK OF MARK.
HOLY WRIT

BOOK 1

Chapter 1

One of the soldiers back there in the grove had reached for him as they closed in on the clearing and he had torn himself away, leaving his fine linen cloak in the soldier's hand. A fine cloak, of Egyptian linen, with a letter ^{me} clearly woven, in blue silk, ^{at the collar.} He left just beneath the hem where it buttoned across the ~~cloak.~~ He left it in the soldier's hand. ^{He ran out of the grove.} Then in the darkness which lay pooled and stubborn underneath the trees of the garden, he thought the man was a soldier.

~~As~~ he was thrashing deep into the brush, the brambles whipping at his bare legs, the longer vines trying to strangle him with holds about his waist. But ^{clutching at his chest and shoulders.} HE LUNGED. ^{dragged} WILDLY, BREAKING ^{PAST BUT ONE} HIS WAIST. ~~WILDLY, BREAKING~~ MUMBLING WITH FEAR, HE PLUNGED about him and spun him halfway around, ^{got it well around his wrists} and into his fists and jerked it out at the roots. The tough vine ^{WEALED} his ^{back the tears} FLESH ^{ploughed} and the roots kicked dirt into his face. He blinked and whimpered angrily and ^{clearing} forward again. He broke into a ^{clearing} section of the grove and ran down an avenue of trees.

^{RACING} ~~Through~~ through the avenue, and ~~he was sure these were trees.~~ ^{THE TREES SEEMED TO RUSH AT HIM} ~~But then they~~ ^{HUGE,} ~~fell back into line.~~ ^{HUGE,} ~~behind him, silently, clanking no swords, using no other.~~ ^{SOMEHOW FRIENDLY. THEY CLANKED NO WEAPONS, SWORE NO OATHS AS HAD THE} ROMAN SOLDIERS.

He ran HARD. IN THE DARK, HIS FEET CAUGHT IN ONE OF THE SHALLOW IRRIGATION DITCHES. HE STUMBLERED ON THE EDGE OF THE DITCH. CLUTCHING FORWARD as he fell and the roots ripped at his fingernails, the edge of THE HARD-PACKED EARTH REARED UP AND SMOTE HIS CHIN. HE CLAMBERED UP, FACE ACHING. HE RAN ON.

He broke OUT OF the trees. The tears HAD DRIED ON HIS CHEEKS LIKE SALT LICKS IN THE COOL SPRING NIGHT AND THE WIND OF HIS FLIGHT, produced a fierce smarting when the cold wind mingled with them. On this HILLOCK, HE WAS VERY EXPOSED. HIS EGRESS FROM open flank of the hill, was tipped with ice. The sweatbeads on the exposed parts of his body tingled as if tiny fires had been lit all over him. His egress from the wood to open ground had been uncautiously noisy, even tumultuous — and they ALMOST CAUGHT HIM.

But Quartus, who commanded the Company which held THE extended line on WITH A GROWL the edge of Gethsamane, facing the city, stayed his squadman's hand. WHO WAS Quartus, full of pride in the glittering record of the first cohort of the Legion ALSO of Ravens, was puking mad at this police work. That the job to bring in a wild Nazarene should have been wished on his beloved First Captain, made Quartus angry indeed. "Let the Abram go," he growled at a GUARDSMAN SETTING HIMSELF FOR THE SPEARING. OBEIENTLY, ON THE SPEAR, the squadman shifted his grip, the flexors in his upper arm ceased to quiver, and John Mark was not pierced.

BLEATING

SAFELY

He was left to flee down the steeper tilt of the mount of Olives. The Kedron gurgled between the rocks just ahead of him. He leaped the brook in a flurry of limbs and barked his shin on a rock. The pain made him whimper. The sound of IT SHAMED HIM. LIKE A LAMBEN LEFT BEHIND. LIKE A NESTLING FALLEN FROM THE NEST LIKE A SNIVELING LITTLE KID. Suddenly, JOHN MARK HIS JAW SET STUBBORNLY. HIS EYES SOUGHT A STONE. He braked. He deliberately drew back his foot and struck his shin to the rock. He winced at the pain, but his teeth clamped at his shin. The pain passed and he breathed in deeply, swelling his chest and nodding IN Triumph at the rock. A glare HAD PIERCED A corner of his eye.

He swung his glance up the hillock and saw the torches issuing OFF AGAIN HE POUNDED, from the garden. He laboured up the slope, from the brook. He

UNEXPECTEDLY HE THREW UP HIS HEAD.

He would make for the Shepherd's Gate. He had to get into the city to warn ~~her~~ *1415*
~~MOTHER~~ and he would use the Shepherd's Gate. Shepherd's Gate!

Shepherd's Gate?

JEHOVAH,
 O, ~~what~~ what a joke.

Just put his mother aside, and then, O, God, what a joke.

HAD NOT
~~He~~ *he*, once, standing on the mount of Olives and looking across
 the Kedron, declared that his sheep knew his voice and would follow him through
 the Shepherd's Gate?

That had been a morning in the late spring, last year, and an undulating
 flow of woolly white backs had been pouring up the hill and through the Gate,
 past the fortress of Antonia and through the court of the Gentiles to the
 sheep market. And, John Mark, fourteen then and headful of dreams of intrigue
 and conquest, had heard a hidden meaning in the words:

My sheep know my voice; they will come when I call

For what else could the Nazarene have meant but that at his shout, the
 wandering peoples of Israel, gathered as they were gathering now for the Pass-
 over season, would pour into the city behind him and turn their swords on the
 Roman ~~army~~?

EVERYTHING HAD CRASHED.
 That was what he had believed a year ago. And *had believed* less than an hour ago. *BUT NOW,*
~~Now~~ *LEADING HIM* the Romans would be leading him! The shorn sheep, *LEADING HIM* through the Shepherd's
 Gate. John Mark violently shook his head.

He threw himself into the tall grass which grew beside the road. A
 platoon of soldiers hurried down the road from the city, breastplates jangling
 and their rough Latin sounding queer and more foreign than ever to him. He
 looked up after they had passed.

He was near enough to the gate to see that the guard-post had been

doubled. He guessed that the soldiers who had just passed were reinforcements for the arresting party, in case any of the Nazarene's men tried to rescue him. **JOHN**

MARK

^{KNOW} knew how it would be. After the party had entered the gates, the gates would be locked and barred and the double guards mounted. ^{NOBODY COULD LEAVE OR ENTER JERUSALEM.} This simple matter of regaining his house in David Street had ^{NOW} taken on ^{DANGEROUS} complications. ^{ALL OF A SUDDEN} it had happened, ^{RIGHT}

NOW, the road which wound past his feet and went between the turrets yonder and marched into the city, was a road ~~to be loved and to be desired.~~ ^{FULL OF DANGER. IF THEY CAUGHT HIM TRYING} TO GET IN, THE LEAST HE COULD EXPECT WOULD BE A SCOURGING. AND YET, HE HAD TO WARN HIS MOTHER. SHE ^{WAS} ~~SOME~~ IN PERIL ^{OF HER LIFE}

JOHN MARK fought down an overpowering urge to leap to his feet and to rush

^{INTO} ~~the~~ ^{PERILIOUS} ~~road.~~ ^{DESPAIR} To rush out of this ~~road~~ ^{THAT THREATENED TO ENGULF HIM} and to escape into the city, where ^{A STREET WAS A COLD} ~~the~~ ^{STREETS THAT} ~~grey rope~~ ^{KNOTTING} ~~your throat;~~ but where they were warmed by names, and brown cobbles, and yellow lamplight, and sidewalks broomed ^{CLEAN} daily.

One of the watch called from the turret and wheels whirled ^{ON} the road. The boy ^{HUGGED THE GROUND AS} ~~the~~ the light army vehicle flew by. He saw the silhouette of the helmet, and the arm upraised in salute to the guard as the Roman officer drove into the city. ~~the boy~~ ^{HE SCUDDLED BEHIND A THICK BUSH.}

^{RAIDING PARTY} ~~coming from Gethsemane~~ ^{PLACE.} His heart in his mouth, he watched them ^{MARCH ABBREAST OF HIS HIDING}

Ahead of the soldiers, walked the gang from the Temple — the High Priest's mobsters, with fearsome faces and brutal cudgels. ^{THESE WERE THEY WHO} kept a semblance of order in the shrill courtyard of the Gentiles, or hurled ~~the~~ the first stones at blasphemers sentenced to death. ^{BEHIND THE NOISY TEMPLE MOB}

^{MARCHED} ~~the~~ the Roman soldiers, ^{TOLD 'AS} ~~tramping~~ in an arrogant silence. ^{TRIED TO} ~~behind the~~ ^{BUT} ~~the~~ the Nazarene's head against the light of the stars, ^{SHUDDERED,} ~~the~~ the soldiers hemmed him around. ^{THEY WERE HEAVILY ARMED.}

The boy hunched his head between his shoulders and pressed the back of his hand to his mouth. ^{HE WAS CITY KID ENOUGH TO} ~~KNOW A HANGING-SQUAD.~~ ^{SHOULDER HARNESS CREAKED.}

voice spilling over with triumph. ~~HEARD~~ "Find him and we will crucify the wretch and his family in loyalty to Caesar and for a warning to Israel!"

②

For a moment, Janus regarded ~~the~~ ^{late-filled} ~~the~~ face of the priest. ^{Then he} shrugged and looked away ~~also~~.

"My men are not magicians, High Priest," he said quietly. "The population of Jerusalem has trebled since the pilgrims commenced arriving for your Paschal season. Seeking an unknown stranger in Jerusalem during the days of unleavened bread is as difficult as pushing a camel through a needle's eye. You know that."

A peculiar sound coming from the High Priest brought back ^K the officer's glance to him. Janus almost recoiled from the man. An unholy glee had spread all over the yellow face. With his unwrinkled skin, Janus saw a resemblance to an infant spawned out of horror. The hand holding the cloak shook as if palsied.

"It will not be as difficult as you imagine, First Captain!" he cried in a high voice. "All tongues cry out at treason against Caesar --- and - this - this garment has spoken! Here --- here --- look!"

Under the hem of the cloak, there was a letter embroidered, worked in blue thread. Janus was annoyed at himself that he had not noticed it before. But he had not examined the cloak at all from the time it had been thrust into his hand. He could not even recall which of his men had given it to him.

"Not much to go on," he grumbled shortly.

The priest's seant eyebrow shot up. He spat out the words like pebbles ^{thrown} ~~at~~ at the soldier.

"I admit the letters do not give us a complete description of whom we seek. It does not say he has red hair, ~~like yours~~ as is yours, nor your noble bearing, nor shoulders and thighs as your god, Jupiter, nor the rules of breeding which have come to truth in your handsome face. But, when the peace of the Emperor is concerned, then, I submit, First Captain, there is something to go on!"

Janus looked steadily into the mocking eyes. ^{*} For some ^{strong} reason, the High Priest was risking the capable anger of a First Captain. Clearly, then, crafty High Priest possessed a couple of hidden weapons. And until the hidden arsenal was exposed, Janus thought he would see to his own defenses. And so far as he could see, his first line of defence was to do his duty as a soldier. The schemers of the Temple would find no weakness there. He was now certain that the assignment was no accident. So he would find the cloak's owner. He would find the poor fool and throw him to the Temple wolves.

Janus finished his fast thoughts and nodded curtly to the High Priest.

returned
He ~~would return~~ to the fortress of Antonia. He stood for a moment on the steps and looked back down into the court of the Gentiles. Many of the poorer pilgrims to Jerusalem for the Passover, had taken up residence ^{in the court} ~~down there~~. They looked like overblown roses, settled around their cooking fires with the firelight glowing on their carri-coloured robes. A stroke of luck, it was, that his search would be among the upper classes, and not these. Otherwise, the old proverb of the camel and the needle's eye would be ~~sickeningly~~ appropriate. He went to his rooms and sent for Quartus.

Quartus was squat and powerful and had almost been flung to the lions in the Circus at Rome when he was seventeen — for knocking an innkeeper on ~~the~~ ^{He} head and unlimbering his purse, ~~he~~ had been saved for posterity by Janus who had seen the promise in the salty young hoodlum and drafted him into the Ravens. He had turned into a fine legionnaire. He killed without passion, like a machine. He also loved Janus with the fierce devotion of a wolfhound. Alone, they were nearer intimates than master and man. He freshened the dreary round of duties which fell to ^a First Captain in ^{the army of} ~~connection with the~~ occupation ⁱⁿ ~~by the army, of~~ Jerusalem.

His ~~lean~~ muscular forearm glistened with perspiration when he saluted the officer.

"What have you been doing?" Janus asked out of curiosity.

Quartus grinned and smoothed down his forearm with a huge hand. "Beating up a few disciples of the Nazarene. They booted at us while we were taking him in."

Janus settled back on the couch, hands clasped behind his head. "Did you arrest any of them?"

The low forehead of Quartus broke into a series of corrugations that betokened his surprise. "Me?" He thumbed his chest. "Arrest them? What's this? Has the army become temple police?"

Janus dismissed it with a flick of his fingers. "No matter. He wouldn't be among that lot."

The captain ignored the puzzle on the soldier's face. His eyes were withdrawn as he thought. He spoke:

"Annas is the world's sharpest priest. His spies are everywhere — like his Omnipresent God. Yet, he has not been able to secure the evidence he must have to pull in any of the Nazarene's superior friends. I'm beginning ~~to~~ ^{to} suspect he's using the governor; that Friend Annas has no evidence, not even against the Nazarene."

Quartus protested in an indignant voice. "Then why —?"

"Why was the army brought in? I'll tell you, ~~the~~ sweat-smelling Quartus. Even if Annas' spies have failed him, the priest knows human nature. Our sharp priest knows the power of suggestion. He knows that the instant it is known that the arrest was made by the army, even those Hebrews who had been laughing at his priests — you know the story is that the Nazarene has been confounding the priests with passages taken from their own book of laws — well, Annas knows that even those who had been laughing will commence to re-examine this fellow's words with greater care. And you know what they will do?"

Janus sat up and reached for his officer's rod. He flicked it back and forth while he talked, staring at the tip. "They will, my dear, nobble-kneed Quartus, bring to Annas, or his son-in-law, Caiaphas, the tiniest word, a disjointed phrase, anything they had heard him say and which they consider capable of supporting

the slightest construction of sedition. You know why?"

A grin broke the heavy features. "So the peace of Rome will be kept," Quartus glibly intoned.

"So, pax Romae," Janus repeated. His face tightened. "They have waxed fat and secure on it. No Hebrews are drafted into the army. The roads are kept broad and brigand-free for their trade. ~~His~~ Life is fine for them."

He turned a pair of ^{dark brown} ~~eyes~~ eyes on Quartus' face. "But there is a bigger why, my ugly friend. Reply to this one. Why me? Why chose me for the dirty?"

Quartus pulled his eyebrows fiercely together. Janus' eyes roved unsmilingly over the homely face. Then the officer burst into a ~~quiet~~ laugh, brought his feet from the couch and stood. He placed a hand on the soldier's shoulder.

"Never mind, Quartus. We have a few things to do before we see the answer to that one. There's a rich, and, I believe, young Hebrew somewhere in this city tonight ^{WHO} ~~he~~ left a fine linen cloak behind when he ran from Gethsamane. We must find him before morning --- even if it takes the entire First Cohort and the tearing down of the city, stone by stone."

CHAPTER 14

His nose ached with the cold and the muscles at the back of his legs ~~also~~ ached with weariness. He was walking through a street of inns and open storefronts, the warming braziers in the doorways surrounded by voluble but pocket-poor pilgrims who told stories of their travels. Stories told in payment for the comfort of a fire in the wind's ^{LEE} ~~often~~, the canny innkeepers knew, drew a brisk in wine out of the ^{trade} ~~inn~~ ^{hometowners} ~~non-travelling~~ but rewarded the travellers for providing ~~entertainment~~ ^{The evening's entertainment}. But John Mark, hurrying down the colonnades, ~~did not~~ ^{had no} desire to hear of racing stables and washing machines in ^{LIVELY} ~~any~~ Antioch, nor of the ten miles of gardens and terraced temples in the groves of Daphne ^{filled with SINFUL PRIESTS}. Nor of Spain and Egypt, Greece or Persia -- or anything whatever of politics. He wanted to be home with his mother.

So he was experiencing a smouldering wrath each time he was forced from the pavement ^{forced} ~~into~~ the cutting wind blowing through the streets ~~to~~ ^{would like to be} ~~avoid~~ some larger story-swapping group. He ~~thought angrily that he would~~ ^{strength and giant arms, and gather the city walls in his great crushing arms and crush} ~~and he would bet that bits and pieces of every nation and~~ ^{and he would bet that bits and pieces of every nation and} ~~every city and country would pop out of Jerusalem tonight.~~ ^{He grinned at the thought of offering this piece of what,} ~~It occurred to him that this thought could be offered to the Rabbi,~~ ^{called original thinking, to the Rabbi,} ~~Gamaliel, within the hearing of Saul, when next he sat in the class. He~~ ^{show-off Roman-Jew,} ~~doubted that the mocking~~ ^{Saul, could offer a better thought.} ~~Crusty~~ ^{old Gamaliel} ~~would be pleased at the lad from David Street.~~

Then, remembering Saul, he felt ~~hollow~~ ^{hollow} as a drum. For Saul and the Committee would be waiting for him by the Jaffa Gate in the dark of the morning, ^{Teering Saul, reminding him how he} ~~had boasted~~ ^{that the Nazarene would lead the revolution. Saul would TEER IN Greek,} ~~boastings concerning the Nazarene, the Greek from his twisted lips, calling~~ ^{a language that fell with the grace and BITE of WHIPS.} ~~as graceful as whips. For by that time, Saul and the Committee would~~ ^{have known of the ignoble arrest.} ~~But he would be there and he~~ ^{But John Mark promised the TEER or not he would climb the} ~~would climb it. Even if his bones turned to water, he would climb that wall.~~ ^{Nothing good ever came out of that.}

Jaffa Gate and show them.

He left the street of inns and turned into a ^{weal-thier} ~~classier~~ neighbourhood.

"Hole, Nazareth," Saul the Tarsusian once said.

He had slipped away from the column after entering the city. Now he was ^{on} ~~leaving~~ ~~down~~ a course which would steer him clear of the Temple by a wide berth and bring him into David Street, to the big house where his mother waited alone. He was hurrying to her. The night's work of the spies would hardly be over with the arrest of the Nazarene. Ishcariot would have told them in whose house the Nazarene had given his supper. Then, they would ^{be after} ~~go for~~ her.

^{I Sweating with} ~~In a sweat of~~ fear, he broke into a stumbling run. He had to get her out of the house quickly. She would not have known that the Nazarene had been arrested. She would be waiting inside the house, her brow unworried and the ^{HAZEL} light at the back of her eyes, ~~a serene smile~~. She would smile at him as he entered the house — smile, unaware of the Jaws of the trap closing ~~on~~ on her. He blinked a film out of his eyes, looked up and saw he was in David Street. He made the last few yards in a rush and crouched ^{at} ~~by~~ the steps.

A light burnt behind the glass above the door of the narrow entrance hall; higher, there was another, in his mother's room. He must get her out quickly then, together, they could run and hide until the terror was over. The spare, old priest, with his multitude of spies would soon be reaching out for them. Heart beating fast, he turned his head for a final look at the street. Everything seemed quiet, nobody from the Temple lurking. ~~at the door~~. He levered himself up by his arms and did a fast roll across the rail to the landing. The door was not locked. He ~~was~~ ^{he} frowned; must ^{talk} ~~say~~ to her about it. ^{Those times will over.} ~~his heart~~ ~~filled with pride as it came home forcibly to him that~~ ^F From now on, he must take care of her. Alternately nodding and pouting to himself, he eased the door open and slipped inside.

The hall ^{had} ~~was paved~~ in coloured tiles and there were polished benches set against the walls. A flight of stairs mounted at the end of the hall to the 2nd landing of the upper floor. Incoming guests sat on the benches and had their feet washed by the servants before ascending to the guest chamber. The Nazarene and his band had sat there tonight and he had peered down at the

familiar bearded faces from the head of the stairs. He remembered them and *AGAIN*
the anger sharpened in him. ~~HE~~ *HE*

~~He~~ *slapped* ~~the bench~~ and it clattered against the wall.
Chest heaving, he glared at the bench as it jerked woodenly ~~against the wall~~.

~~"Who is it?"~~ "Is that you, John? John?" *She was awake.*

~~He~~ *heard her voice.* The bench still chattered worriedly at the blow *and accusingly*
until it regained its balance and was suddenly quiet. It ~~seemed~~ *to* look back

~~at him.~~ He aimed his hand again and then he heard the sound at the
head of the stair and he held back the blow *and* flashed a guilty glance
upward. *She was pressing down, one* ~~his~~ hand rested lightly on the carved knob of the rail and the

other held ~~her~~ *her* hair off her face. ~~She was pressing down, striking the~~
HE KNEW SO WELL AND LOVED CAUGHT AT HIM. HE ~~smile~~ *smile* ~~as she recognised him and ascending to~~

The ~~Amusement~~ *Small Amused*

~~the long ends of her eyes, throwing tiny wrinkles out at the ends like~~
GREYD APPEARED AT THE LONG ENDS OF HER EYES. ~~She~~ *could smile like that for him forever.* She

was straight as a young cedar and her voice was warm and vital and his pride
and love for her was a living thing in him. *MAKING LIKE THE MAN OF THE HOUSE,*
But he must look back stonily at
her, ~~and make like the man of the house.~~

"Johnny," *she said,* ~~she~~ *moving* ~~down the stairs,~~ "what ~~is it?~~" *is it?* ~~you trying to tell me?"~~

Only ~~She~~ *she* was not like some mothers he knew. She looked at you
and knew you had something to tell and made it easy for you. You never had to
fight your stiffening lips nor blubber in the effort to talk either. He was an
TALLER THAN HER, ~~inch~~ *too tall* for his age, she sometimes said sharply when she saw
him with the older Saul, the Greek boy. Then *SHE* sometimes said it softly,
when she said he would be as tall as his father had been. He could not remember
his father at all since he had died before he was seven. Her forehead was level
with his ~~eyes~~ *eyes* and he liked the
way the hair roots sprung cleanly from her ~~eyebrow~~ *brow* and he guessed no mother
could be *NICER.*

"They have arrested the Nazarene!" he blurted at her.

She was unnaturally still. And he could not understand it until he realised that for some moments she had stopped breathing; and then she was saying quite calmly:

"We must send for Cousin ^{DEMUS.} ~~Benny~~. He will know what ^{TO DO AND WHAT THE PRIESTS} ~~they~~ are doing to — him. ^{DEMUS} ~~Benny~~ will know how to help him."

^{HER WORDS} ~~That~~ switched his mind to Cousin ^{DEMUS!} ~~Benny~~ ~~for an instant~~ and ~~he~~ inwardly ^{he} groaned. Holy Moses, but the trouble that knowing the Nazarene had brought!

^{HE} ~~But~~ "I ^{SAID} ~~say~~ they have arrested him!"

"Yes, yes, I heard you, John. That is why we must go to Cousin ^{DEMUS} ~~Benny~~. He will know how to help him."

"But — its you we must think of now, ^{mother!} ~~And~~ Cousin ^{DEMUS} ~~Benny~~ cannot help you!"

For suddenly, he saw, plainly as if it had been written out for him, that ^{WOULD KNOW THROUGH HIS} Annas' ~~spies must have told the priest~~ how ^{NO} ~~Demus~~ had gone with them that night, to the Nazarene's camp on the mount of Olives. ^{DEMUS WOULD NOT HAVE ANY} PULL NOW WITH THE TEMPLE PEOPLE.

^{when} He remembered the day, not long after the visit ^{to the Nazarene's camp,} the day in the Sanhedrin, Annas had declared that the Nazarene's party should be suppressed and he condemned as a token of good intent to the Romans. Cousin ^{DEMUS} ~~Benny~~ had pointed out that, under ~~the~~ Hebrew law, the Nazarene could not be condemned except at a proper trial.

He had gone to the Sanhedrin with his mother to listen to the debate, ^{NICODEMUS,} ~~she~~ being very proud of the young lawyer who was their kinsman. And he had felt her hand tighten cosily on his arm as ^{UNCLE DEMUS} ~~Benny~~, cool and distinguished even although he was the youngest among the bearded lawyers, had spoken with undisputable logic. And he had looked up at her face when she pressed his arm and had seen the candles lit at the back of her eyes. But just then, unaccountably, the candles had gone out and her face became cold and dead. ^{Swiftly looking around}

^{found} ~~But~~ ^{HE HAD} he had ~~divined~~ the cause. ~~For he had shot a glance back to the~~ ^{slowly} ~~the~~ ^{and} seen the hate ~~plain~~ in the eyes of Annas as ~~the~~ the priest rose ^{and}

glared down at ~~Dea~~ *Uncle Demus*.

And "Are you too one of the Galileans who follow this ~~carpenter's~~ *Jesus?*" son, ~~Nicodemus?~~ *Annas* asked softly.

But, O, full of venom.

Uncle Demus' ~~face~~ face whitened. ~~Silent~~, *grew still* the room, Only the ~~rust~~ *of fans* swish, ~~will~~ wielded by the slaves. His mother's hand tight on him and her breath drawn in agony.

And then it had come.

It had come, breaking a silence that had been ready to pounce on you. *grand* The ~~best~~ lilt of laughter from that *same* Roman captain whose frequent visits to their house *Uncle Demus HAD NOT* ~~they had never~~ liked.

"By the gods, High Priest," he chuckled, "no such orator as Nicodemus could have come out of the ignorant ~~Grix~~ Galileans!"

O, then, Annas lashed to pieces with fury, but not daring to pit himself against the power from Rome. For Janus was First Captain to the garrison at Jerusalem, second only to the chiliarch who commanded, and was that day representing the *PONTIUS PILATE,* governor *at* the Sanhedrin. And Annas had abruptly gathered his robes about him, stalked from the *DAIS* and swept out of the room, his ~~face~~ *WRATH* wriggling behind him and something to laugh at.

He was clutching both her arms and he knew he was hurting her by the pain in his fingers. She was looking steadily at him and he ~~occasionally~~ *FLUSHED* with shame as he released her. She looked away *and* ~~away~~, then back at him, but not at his face but at ~~his fingers~~ *TIPS* her fingers, lightly ~~touching~~ *brushing* his shoulder.

"Your cloak, Johnny? *Where is your linen* ~~You've lost your cloak?~~ *Where did you get this SHABBY THING*

Perhaps she couldn't smell spy. He could smell it. *ON* the cloak. ~~sure~~ *enough*. You had to know the smell. [He had to get her away, But, O, sweet Sarah, *as Saul would say* ~~where~~ in Jewry would she be safe from the Temple

wolves? ^{Uncle Domus} Not even at ~~Domus~~'s house; for he too must be on the list and would perhaps soon need saving himself. And the Roman officer would not save ~~Domus~~ ^{Uncle Domus} either, since she would not be there to smile her thanks to him, ^{SHE HAD} as ^h that day in the Sanhedrin.

O, he knew all about that. ^{JOHN MARIC} ~~He~~ had eyes in his head.

And ^{JUST} about then, when the idea had almost stolen past him, he ~~discovered~~ discovered it.

Janus Aurelius could do it. He was First Captain, second only to the commander of the garrison and kin to the governor. There was power enough in him to scare off a High Priest. Without an instant's delay, he would seek his mother's friend, the First Captain, Janus Aurelius.

Chapter 4

The old soldier who was concessionnaire for the officers' tavern in Fort Antonia, filled the goblets again. Silently, he sucked in his mouth while the wine ran out of the goatskin bag. He cut the flow with two fingers when the goblets were filled, whipped the bag to upright without spilling a drop. He walked away, hips rolling under the apron strings.

Max Seneca whispered maliciously: "The old rooster is gaining weight on inactivity and lees." He bent his face to the goblet to draw off the bead. He looked up again, smacking his lips. "Rich as a Jew by now, that fat Roman is."

Guiseppe Zellini grinned wolfishly. He had not drunken so much for a long time now. The grin changed to a snarl. "Stinking rich, all these Jews are," he said viciously. "Rich and mean! Hear they only offered thirty pieces of silver for the fellow. Silver, not gold."

Max Seneca gave him a long, slow look; said idly: "But old Pilate will get a skinful. *The Jews ~~will~~ will not be stingy with him.*"

"Well,"
~~he~~ he gave them what they asked for — a First Captain *to do a dirty little job."*
~~whispered thickly~~ *"Should have been yours had not Pilate taken it away and give*
~~to Pilate took away your job and gave it to the First,"~~ Seneca
 jeered at him.

They both believed Janus Aurelius too big for his boots / and their mutual hatred and satisfaction made them now into strange bedfellows. Guiseppe Zellini was at the foot of the echelon, a beefy, roaring middleaged man who had taken half a lifetime to push up from the ranks. Arrived at the officer^{XXI} class, he was now puzzled and bedevilled with a baffling inferiority, although he still preserved the roar. *"He looks*
~~Max Seneca thought~~ *MAXIMUS* like a steer in the first weeks of being a steer," *MAX SENECA ONCE DESCRIBED HIM.*

Maximus Seneca was Second Captain in the Cohort. If Janus was kicked

^{OFF}
~~down~~ the ladder, he would be next man up. So it made him very pleased to learn that Janus was worried; and he was buying several drinks for Guiseppe. Guiseppe was also very pleased and proud to sit at the same table with him and to call him Max when he wished. Max nastily said a few words.

Guiseppe said: "Personally, Max, I don't think he does. He wants to be a general." Personally, he thought he did, but Max should know he was not a yessing man.

"To spit in your eye," Max growled. "Don't generals like Jewish women?"

~~"After they become generals, Max."~~

Guiseppe recalled that Jewish women were very haughty. He had been hoping for some time, believing it would rid him of his bafflement. A look of pain and longing appeared incongruously on the brutal face, softened the ugly visage for a moment before the scowl returned.

"After they become generals," he muttered bad humouredly.

CHUCKLED.

Max Seneca stared at him; a faint spread the corners of his mouth. "So ~~now they've taken away your job and given it to the First!~~ So ^{you're out} — you old crucifier! *THEY HAVE BOUNCED YOU FROM THE PUNISHMENT SQUAD.*"

Daunted
 Guiseppe was a whale at scourgings. His artistry in dislocating arm-sockets at one pull had been the talk of barrack-rooms from Rome to the Red Sea. He worked his lower jaw, eyes gleaming under the beetling brows.

"That bloody bastard, Pilate!"

Max Seneca chuckled. "Hey, its no skin off your nose. You may get pushed up a rung."

Guiseppe hoped his shrug had the airy nonchalance that shrugs ^{HAD WHEN THEY} were given by Max and the other officers. He moved away from the point.

"Guess they'll put up the Nazarene," he said.

"Away up," Max said cheerfully. "They'll use the nails."

"Wish it were the ropes. The Nazarene is a clever chap."

Max shook his head. "Nails are better. Ropes take too long." ~~He drank~~
"THAT'S WHAT I MEAN," GUISEPPE SAID WITH A CRUEL GRIN.

MAX DRANK

some wine, leaned over and spewed some from the side of his mouth. It spattered near a foot of Guiseppe but Guiseppe didn't say anything. He drew in his foot after Max had straightened.

Max said: "Town's too full of Isaacs ⁱⁿ /for the Passover. Seething by Saturday-Sunday. Would be foolish to tie up thirty-forty men standing around waiting for him to die. ~~NAILS~~ Nails are quicker."

"You talk like a First already," Guiseppe growled. "I say the rope. I would like to hear him talk ^{WHILE HE IS} up on the cross. ~~AA~~ ^{HA} He's a clever Nazarene." *GUISEPPE* ^{HA} was an expert on crucifixions.

Max shrugged. "Clever? ~~AA~~ They took him like a chicken."

He lifted a finger at the barman. Guiseppe saw the finger and he tingled happily inside. Wine gurgled out of the goatskin ^{IN} a way to remember tomorrow and all the other thirsty tomorrows.

"Listen to this one!" Guiseppe trumpeted happily. Then he would have bitten it off, but Max had strung a pair of lazily keen eyes on his face.

He went on unhappily: "Er - well - one day a couple of high up Isaacs cornered the Nazarene by the fortress walls. I - I - was behind the wall - by arrangement with the Isaacs. You know how it is, Max, ^{NOT THAT I LIKE SPYING} ~~HA~~ ha ha. Anyway, the Isaacs said to him: 'Look, Leader, we know you to be fearless — and sincere. Not like those false alarms who appear every now and then. All of us here in Jerusalem are ready to rise whenever you say. But since you are sent by our God to lead us, why should we pay our taxes to Caesar? Surely you could use the money to send the message to Jews scattered all over the Empire!'" "

Max leaned forward interestedly. Guiseppe warmed to his story, his beady eyes glistened.

^{Nazarene} "You know what the clever ~~ISRAELITE~~ did? You know what he did? Listen. First, he took a penny from one of them. Wouldn't even use his own money, see? He would answer them in their own coin - ha ha. He took this penny and said: 'Whose head do you see on this penny? Mine? Or Caesar's?'"

Max nodded gravely. "They saw his head of course. He's a clever Nazarene."

"They did not!" Guiseppe said, ^{angry at MAX FOR RIDICULING HIM.} ~~entranced~~. "They saw Caesar's head. ^{WE SEE} They said: 'Caesar's head. Caesar's head.' And he said: 'Well, give it to Caesar. It's his.' Just like that. Isn't he clever? ^{GIVE IT TO CAESAR. IT'S HIS.}"

Max dropped his head upon his forearm, ~~the~~ elbows resting on the table. He leered up at Guiseppe through a fan of his spread fingers. "They'll use the nails. He can't be clever with the nails."

"That's what I said!" Guiseppe cried. "He'd talk a lot if they used the ropes. We put up a fellow once, at Capua, with the ropes, and he was alive for six days until we lit a slow fire under ~~XXXX~~ him —"

He stopped, roved the tip of his tongue briefly over his lips. "Which reminds me. I'm going to roast Barabbas."

"Who's Barabbas?" Max asked curiously.

"Another of their politicians who would free them of Rome - ha ha."

Max said slowly, disgustedly: "Alright, pig. Now talk."

Guiseppe's brow contracted, alternately rose and fell like signals. His mouth went slack in astonishment.

Max said coldly: "You've had all the liquor you will get out of me tonight. Now I want to hear. What's going on at the Temple? ^{WHY IS JANUS WORRIED?}"

Guiseppe's brows ^{SETTLED} ~~reared horizontally~~ and his eyes ^{GREW} ~~cunningly~~ ~~glared~~. He shrugged his fat neck lower inside his collar and spread his hands on the table. He had broad hands and thick fingers. ^{MAX GLARED AT HIM.}

"You are closer to the Temple than fleas to a dog. ^{GUISSEPPE.} You pick up blood money from the priests, trapping a few lousy seditioners. You are their man for scourgings and crucifixions. ~~Now~~ Yet, Annas fixes it tonight with the governor so the First Captain is assigned to him. Why?" he ~~snapped~~ ^{bared}.

Guiseppe ~~showed~~ ^{bared} his teeth, ^{like an animal.} and snarled in his throat. The big hands closed slowly, lifted, ^{down on} ~~rammed back~~ to the table.

"Listen — you —!" roared Guiseppe.

Max leaned nearer to him. Max His eyes held no passion in them as he

looked into Guiseppe's , only a bright curiosity.

"Talk --- or I'll have you broken, you peasant. For a Roman officer, you're too close to the Temple. You even know how much they arranged to pay for the Nazarene. You ought to be back in the ranks where you could mix with their mobsters to your pig's heart content."

Guiseppe often had it ^{HAPPEN} in bad dreams. He was too old for anything like that to happen to him. He had tried too hard. He felt he could cry.

He dug his fingernails into the table and spoke woodenly.

"Annas wants to get at Janus - and Nicodemus. He'll do so through the girl. She's a cousin to Nicodemus. Annas knows the Nazarene had ^{the PASSOVER} supper at her house with his fellows. I went there with some of my men, but they had already left for Gethsamane. When I returned to the Temple, Annas told me to stay out of it. He had a plan --- for Janus."

Max laughed silently, looking at him. Guiseppe, a little lost by the ^{LOSS} ~~turn of the lovely evening~~ ^{OF THE FINE TIME HE HAD BEEN HAVING}, thought ~~he looked at a wax fruit that had suddenly~~ ^{MAX WAS A} split ~~open to reveal yellow teeth.~~ He blinked and moved his heavy shoulders.

"Fool," Max said softly. ^{ANNAS IS A FOOL} He won't be able to work it. Janus is ^{too} close to the governor."

Guiseppe moved again. "He will work it," he muttered.

"How will he work it?"

Scowling unhappily, Guiseppe told him in detail.

Max lifted his finger and the old soldier shuffled forward on fallen arches. Max said: "Drink hearty, friend Guiseppe. Then you and I will go over to see old Annas. You and I should not sit idly by when we could be helping ^{that} smart old priest to work it."

The wine ran and lapped into the goblets. "A toast," Max Seneca murmured, squinting into the beaded cup. "A toast to a Jew. To the poor, ^{Nazarene} cave dwelling preacher ^{USE TO} whose neck I will step up to First."

Then he flung the goblet away from him so it crashed into a corner of the room.

Chapter 5

Quartus assembled the pick of the cohort in the courtyard before ^{the} ~~Janus'~~ chambers. He reported the assembling to ^{James in his chambers} ~~his chief~~. The Captain stepped outside the door and acknowledged the ^{SALUTE} ~~salute~~ with a lift of his arm. His eyes swept over their faces, illumined by the light of several torches set in sconces around the walls. Finally, he nodded.

"Excellent, Quartus." His voice was firm and brisk. "You could not have ^{men if} ~~picked~~ better had you gone through Caesar's praetorian guard."

Erect as they were, their heads ^{went higher} ~~draw up~~. He knew that with the ~~spoken~~ ^{he had spoken} commendation, he had put together a machine of superb efficiency. The flames from the torches ^{ad} ~~leaned~~ away from the wind, ^{and flickered} ~~set~~ a hard burnish in the metal pieces on ^{CHESTS. THE FLAME} ~~their~~ shoulders and breastplates, painted a red lacquer on the ^{OF THE MEN AT RIGID ATTENTION} ~~faces~~ so they looked ~~more than ever~~ like ~~impersonal~~ tools stacked for use.

Janus ^{DUTIES} ~~quietly~~ wondered whether, in view of the peculiar ~~detail~~ ^{ON} ~~on~~ he was sending them, he should be ^{LESS FORMAL WITH THEM; BE} ~~a little more familiar while he gave~~ his orders. But ^{HE} ~~he~~ as quickly decided against it. It was a tough system that had produced this ^{TOUGH} ~~core~~ ^{THAT} ~~which~~ he had sectioned off for swift work tonight. It would do the system no good to unbend.

He tilted his head back. His eyes became unsheathed swords under the peak of his helmet.

"Your mission tonight is to find a man — a Hebrew," he said. "I ~~want~~ ^{want} him found tonight."

He paused. A queer feeling of unease had momentarily passed over him. He strove to anchor his mind. His eyes, ^{DARK} ~~blue~~ and piercing beside the high-bridged nose, flickered ^{along} ~~down~~ the line of faces. In a lull of the wind, the flames burnt straight up and down and the half-darkened faces were once more nut-brown and human. He found himself endeavouring to make a personal issue of ~~it~~ ^{it} between his eyes and theirs. Then he saw, with an awkward blush, for he should have known, that none of the rounded pupils were looking back at

all were fixed at a point above his head.
 him. Good soldiers, she thought, a little proud, a little nettled, good,
wooden soldiers.

But he knew that for all their ^{appearance of} ~~rose in~~ brown stone, ^{statues} his words had
 sunk home. ^{BE BLOWING} That a cold wind would ~~blow~~ behind the doors of Israel on this
 night of warm hearths and welcome. ^{AND ALL} Because of an unscrupulous priest, and
 an ambitious First Captain who was watching his footing lest he slip again.
^{HE REMEMBERED THE DAY} That ~~day~~ in the Sanhedrin. He had been moved by impulse. And, impulse,
 to his profession and breeding, was a foolish quality. He should have withdrawn
 into the shell of disdain that was by tradition the ^{ROMAN ROLE. THE} ~~conquerors'~~ role. Rather
 than have blundered like an emotional plebeian between Nicodemus and the High
 Priest. But a woman had looked pleadingly towards him and he had shrugged off
 the Roman toga. ^{HE} Had sprung, defenceless as a mouse, among the big cat priests.
^{that was} A deed, by the gods, worthy of the rawest novice.

It seemed ^{TO HIM} now, that Pilate must have been told about it since his ^{return}
^{TO} ~~arrival in~~ Jerusalem from Caesarea; and that putting a First Captain at the
 beck and call of ~~XXXXXXXX~~ the Temple was by way of punishment.

But he would see the governor. Right early. With Pilate's reputed
 contempt for the Jews, it was strange that his own kin should be — yes,
humiliated was the word — before — these — these — robed tradesmen.

Mutely, Janus uncorked his anger. He had wanted nothing of them.
 Yet his career was at stake because of this people of a — a — muscled
 intellect. Who could conceive no other gods but a single, unseen deity. To
 whom they daily grovelled behind the locked doors of their synagogues. Whose
 omnipotence lay only in his power to bow their necks for the heels of
 various conquerors. Who, ^{humbled in arms,} raked gold in every city of the world, while other
 men bled and endured. A people with none of the graces.

He wheeled abruptly, destroying the picture of the woman that had
 entered his mind. "Quartus!" he rapped over his shoulder, ^{"TAKE OVER!"} ~~"see to them!"~~

Quartus swivelled his shoulder in a stiff-armed salute until Janus
 had re-entered his quarters. Then he turned to ~~fx~~ face the squad.

Quartus, who had been a notable thief before his twelfth birthday, had been well schooled in the art of face reading in places where failures were swiftly compensated. He had unerringly noted Janus' hesitation in choosing the manner he should adopt with the men. Taking his cue from the abrupt handing over of the squad, Quartus had no hesitation. He would have liked to have known what sudden thought had mottled his chief's face with anger. One thing he knew: there could be no failure tonight.

He relaxed his shoulders, brought the javelin around and grounded the butt. He folded his arms about the shaft and placed his cheek against the weapon and grinned like a fallen angel.

"Alright, rabble, gather around," he murmured dreamily. The men grinned and broke ranks. Still dreamily smiling, Quartus said:

"An initial was stitched into the hem of this mysterious Hebrew's cloak. Must stand for something. So, the Chief wants you gutter spawn to bring in every Abraham you can find whose handle corresponds with the initial."

He paused, and his nose seemed to sharpen. "But — and pay close attention, you scum of the Ravens — we have reason to believe the Isaac we are seeking, is a lily. One of the world's gentlemen. Wealthy as sin. Keeps talented women, one of whom may have sewn the evidence into the cloak by which we shall crucify him. So, my dear ruffians, you should confine your search to the better class Jacobs. Some of them are as snooty as the senators back home. ^{THOSE,} ~~These~~, you may kick in the face, since you are working for the Temple tonight. Moreover, although to look at yourselves you wouldn't believe it, you are the Roman conquerors."

He looked around at their grinning faces and he lost his smile.

"One more thing. My pal, Janus, the First Captain back there, he says to tell you the galleys are always open to careless legionnaires. So, he says to tell you, you should find this Hebrew."

Chapter 6

Pilate was beautifully bonhomie and his face misty with goodwill, *as if to*
~~to~~ be summoned in his palace, at this late hour, by an impatient First Captain,
and delight.
 was a pleasure ~~to be hugged to his bosom. And so the world should know.~~

"Janus!" he cried delightedly. He turned aside the formal salute
 with a wave that was in part a benediction.

"My dear Janus!"

He repeated the name in an affectionate lower register, giving
 Janus the outrageous feeling that those fat hands were stroking him.

"How awful of me — not seeing you since we arrived from Caesarea
 — dear Jan!"

Jan was the familiar name from Rome. It rang strangely on Janus'
 ear, stirring memories of other days in the capital, in this palace of an
 eastern potentate occupied now by a Roman governor.

He slipped the chinstrap and placed the helmet under his arm as the
 heavy curtains settled behind the governor and he walked into the room. Pilate
 touched his shoulder in a paternal gesture, went past him to the couch at one
 end of the room and bent over the cushions. Turning around and sinking down,
 he indicated where Janus should sit. He looked up and met the captain's eyes
 and smiled at him.

with
 "And/what great affairs of state will you now harass your poor
 governor?"

So. No asking after my health, or how I am enjoying my new post to
 Jerusalem. *HE KNOWS* *HAVE* ~~You know why I~~ come to see ~~you~~ *him*.

Pilate had heaped the cushions into a soft throne. Janus was engaged
 in a struggle to maintain his dignity, perched on this unmanly throne. He felt
 like a pigeon, stuffed and mounted. He wondered if this caprice of Pilate,
 placing him on an absurdly high pile of cushions, was altogether unstudied.
 He planted his feet firmly on the ground, his soldierly form erect.

"I have pursued your orders, sir, concerning the Temple," he reported. "As they were rather, unusual, and urgent, I acted at once, resolving to take an early opportunity of seeing you to find out whether there were any angles you wished to instruct me about — personally."

Pilate rubbed his hands together and smiled again, looking down at his well kept fingers. "Ah, yes, the arrest of that fellow — I have forgotten his name. Our friends at the Temple seemed very keen to apprehend him. I learn you succeeded very well, yes?"

Janus thought the eyes regarding him were soft where the heavy lids shadowed them, hardening towards the centres. Gratification at his success in capturing the prisoner was all about the face; but at the centres of the eyes, it came to a full stop. There, calculation began. Janus allowed a discreet smile to appear on his lips.

"Guiseppe Zellini, our captain at the Temple, would have done as well, sir," he ventured.

Pilate delicately patted back a yawn. "Perhaps he would, perhaps not. Difficult to tell these things, Jan. The point is, you've succeeded. I'm immensely relieved."

His eyes dropped thoughtfully to the floor. Janus stole a look at his face. When you looked long and carefully enough, you could see the ruthless lines in the fleshy face; deep, from the base of his nose, downward, past the corners of his nose. A careless glance would easily slide over the bland mask. Every inflection of his modulated voice, each motion of womanly grace, disproved the rumours of his grim rule in Judea. But Janus thought that if you made a blade of your eye and probed beneath these appearances, you picked up the hard undertones, the feline lust for power, the appalling destruction of which the man was capable.

"Jan? How old are you?" Pilate asked suddenly.

Janus rose. He knew that the whimsy which had made the governor perch him on a high pile of cushions, like a stuffed bird to shoot arrows at, was now passed. Now he was once more the Procurator's protege, his wife's nephew.

"I was born the year of the snowfall. There has been no snow in Rome for thirty-one years," Janus said with a grin.

But then he saw that the hard lights still glinted in Pilate's eyes and his mind circled warily again.

"Really!" Pilate cried warmly. "Just thirty-one --- my boy, you've done well indeed! First Captain at thirty-one --- why, you may be chiliarch of the Twelfth Legion of Ravens well before you're forty, commanding the whole of Jerusalem!"

That His uncle-in-law could put all of his unblushing soul into his most deceitful speeches, Janus knew very well. He shrugged uncertainly at the compliment.

"Your aunt and I am proud of you, Janus. It will mean a great deal to the family if the promise in you proceeds ^{on} its logical course and you go to the Senate. I was a junior officer, ~~Atzyxxxxxx~~ at your age, very junior indeed. Mark my word, you will end a Senator."

"You are a magnificent old rogue. In two breaths you've kicked me upstairs from First Captain to chiliarch to a Senator of Rome. But I don't believe you."

That was what ^{JANUS} ~~he~~ would have liked to say. But he said it only in his mind. From his lips, he murmured: "I hope I will justify your confidence, sir."

Pilate leaned forward and tapped him on the knee. "You will, my boy, you will. It depends of course ~~on you~~ solely on yourself. But on your record, I believe I'm justified. A soldier as yourself has but to obey his orders, with all the intelligence at his command."

"No matter how distasteful they are?"

He would have bitten off his tongue to undo it, but it ^{was} ~~had~~ already ~~been~~ said. He asked himself what had come over him. Was his tour of duty in this dusty

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what Pilate would do. He would be sacrificed to the Temple surely as were those lambs whose slit gullets reddened the altar of burnt offerings each morning when the Hebrews sounded their gongs.

He thought of the queer mission on which he had sent his men tonight. As if he had seen the thought passing through the centurion's head, Pilate asked:

"What of this discarded cloak? Have you discovered the owner?"

He was elated to find that, far from perturbing him, the question had the effect of a quaff of wine. Annas evidently meant business. The Temple was moving with admirable speed. Very well. He could also show a turn of speed. He had done so through that welter of intrigues and pitfalls known as an army career.

Pilate was giving him a searching look. Janus had not moved since he had spoken the question. He frowned a little on Janus, but quickly regained his expression.

"Come, my boy, why the ~~intense~~^{some} pre-occupation? Are you having difficulty there?"

"No, sir. Not yet. My men are seeking him now."

There was a lilt in his reply. He could foresee ^{now} how far Pilate intended to go. ~~Now~~ Very well. He was not in the mood to be burnt this week and he would so show Annas — Pilate, too.

STET. But the Governor was looking strangely at him. "What - did - you - say?"

Janus returned a quizzical stare. "I said we are still seeking him."

Pilate dropped his eyes for an instant, then lifted them again. He nodded. "Put your best men on to it. We must have - er, him before morning." He patted back a yawn.

"Spare nobody, scour the city. Spare nobody, sweet Janus."

Janus gave the horses their heads when he left Herod's palace. The army trap flew through the streets, dancing around corners and whipping down the straights with only a touch on the reins for guidance. The wheels beat a frantic rhythm on the cobbles.

At the corner where the theatre stood, a right-hand turn would take him past the Temple to the Fortress Antonia. He bore down on the left rein and wheeled the horses toward David Street.

Chapter 4

A handful of dates scooped out of a dish in passing and ~~pressed~~ shoved into his mouth so his cheeks bulged and his jaws worked in slow rhythm as it sought room for his molars. ~~he~~ ^{JOHN MARK} proceeded at a fast walk ^{along} down the passage to the door, slipped his feet into sandals lying ^{there} on the stand, eased the door open and peered into the ~~the~~ street. Her hand rested a parting touch on his shoulder and she whispered something before the latch clicked shut behind him. But he did not stay to listen, for he was a Quarry.

When you are a Quarry, your ears prick back and forth and your eyes slew left and right — not for familiar sounds and sights, but for those moves from the hunters which will reveal ^{them} their designs.

He dropped lightly from the top of the steps straight to the pavement. It was a deep drop, but he handled it well — as befitted a man who would early tomorrow morning be taking the Order of the Stairs. ^{Wall}

^{He} Crouched ~~now~~ in the recess beside the steps while he ~~simply~~ looped the thongs of the sandals, his mind tentatively went ahead a few hours when he would be bucking the worst yet that Saul had laid for him. Saul, the ^{TOUGHIE} ~~big boy~~ from Tarsus, was founder and president of the Order. ^{of the Wall} He made the rules. In the dark of the morning, by the Jaffa Gate, a rope you knew for stark fear would be coiling and uncoiling in your belly. Then, although you could not see him, you would know the crooked smile was on his thin lips and that his eyes were wetly ^{SHINING} glistening as he listened for the break in your voice. But, ^{OF ALL} mostly, you couldn't keep your eyes from It. ^{NOT}

John Mark forced his mind back to the present. ^{At the moment he had} There was trouble enough, ~~and to give~~ ^{away} he had at the moment. He must seek the centurion at the fortress of Antonia or ^{his} ~~the~~ reputation of his sweet mother's name, ^{perhaps} her life, would be forfeit. Terror would ^{FALL} shut down on her from the Temple. ^{MUST} If Janus did not protect her from the priests. He knew that ^{PLACE OF HORROR} ~~black spot~~ outside the city walls where the two rough pyramids of stones ^{stood near CLOSE TO} the post with its shackles and ominous stains. Women had been stoned to death ~~there~~ before.

He had not changed from the nondescript cloak which he had taken from the spy. In such a garment, passers-by would believe him to be a bedless tramp and ^{IGNORE HIM} ~~put him from their minds~~.

David Street was ~~in a more thoughtfully dismissed~~ saved from gloom by the light diffused on

bruising

There were mouth-~~callouses~~ callouses in the palm suddenly clamped over his mouth. The hand and the voice at his ear roughly demanding silence would belong to James, the big and fair-haired. With John, his brother, and their father, he had ^{served on} pulled an oar ^{as} about Galilee ^{as} a fisherman before joining up with the Nazarene.

^{JOHN MARK FURIOUSLY THOUGHT} he knew them all; ^{the} half-wild, wind-whipped ^{Roughs} fellows who ^{HARDLY} had had to be taught to wash before they ate; ^{the} earnestly stupid ones like that old Phillip, eager to believe anything; Thomas, the Capernaum ^{HARDHEAD} ^{who} ^{with} ^{accepted} ^{only} ^{what} ^{he} ^{saw} ^{performing} ^{bull}; that Peter, ^{strong} and strong, ^{BOISTEROUS,} ^{mind} quick and fierce, in its decisions, who had cuffed him years ago when first he had ^{PUSHED AND WHEEDED HIS WAY} through the crowd to the Nazarene, but had abruptly ^{HIS PRESENCE} about-wheeled and approved ^{him} with a "Right, Coxswain, you stay around". ^{then} ^{From that day, HE WAS} ^{NO}, he knew them all and had been properly fooled — until tonight.

"THE COXSWAIN"
TO THE ROUGH FISHERMEN
AND THE OTHERS WHO
WALKED WITH
THE NAZARENE

He worked his mouth open under the pressure of James Boanerges' hand and ~~sunk~~ sunk his teeth into it. ^{He} wrenched his shoulder free ^{at} the men's yelp, ^{and} ducked the blow he sensed, rather than saw, coming, lowered his head and charged through the ring of men. He pelted back up the alley to David Street and paused at the corner when he was sure there would be no pursuit.

"You are ~~fools~~ ^{fools} ignorant ~~fools~~!" he shrilled. "GO back to your ~~study~~ pens! You to judge the twelve tribes of Israel — see, I spit! You, the light of the world — then I am blind!" ^{HE REMEMBERED NAZARENE'S SOMETHING ELSE HE HAD HEARD THE NAZARENE SAY} "Didn't ^{the} say you should have no fear? That ^{he would call down} troops of angels to help you? Then why don't you go into old Annas' ^{palace} and remind ^{him} ^{to} ^{call} ^{them} ^{down}?" ^{the Nazarene of his promise} Why do you skulk here while the old fox worries your leader? Answer — you gulls —!"

He backed on his heels as he saw a shape move ^{forward} behind an angry bellow. He yelled a final insult before he turned and ^{RAN} ~~ran~~ away. He slowed after awhile, feeling better than he had felt since he had run from Gethsamane. Take that, he thought, tossing the thought back over his shoulder. Then he closed his mind to it. He resolutely closed his mind to it and stubbornly would not think of ^{anything concerning} ~~going~~ Annas' palace.

Instead, he ran his mind down the Hallel, testing if he had correctly memorized all the ^{IT. THE WORDS WERE PART OF THE RULES IN THE GAME OF THE WALL DEvised BY SAUL.} words of it. Within a few hours, he would need all his brain and sinews to confound Saul and outwit the sentries on duty over the Jaffa Gate. ^{Suddenly a} ^{SHATTERED} high scream ^{shattered} his thoughts.

He was opposite Cousin Demmy's house and the scream had come from there. A party of soldiers issued from the door. He turned and bolted the way he had come.

Chapter 5

Stephen Mark was a false holy man. ~~There~~ A shaggy dog on the outside, bounding straight and lovably along, nosing at no strange doorways, once he stepped indoors at David Street, Stephen was a curly wolf. ^{FOR HIS YOUNG WIDOW, MARY, THE TEMPTATION WAS TO} blow to pieces the reputation for saintliness, which his aunts and female cousins would not allow to be buried with him, ~~had been, for the~~ young widow, Mary Mark, a really brutal temptation. ^{THE TEMPTATION} She resisted ~~it~~ by seeing ~~only~~ the humour of ~~it~~ ^{IN THE SITUATION.}

Stephen had been more than twice her age when they were married. For ~~ten~~ ^{BEEN A MARTINET IN THE HOME.} years he ~~had~~ ^{ROSE} sat heavily in the saddle. She ~~got out~~ ^{WENT} at his bidding, ate, uncomplainingly, the mess of leeks and ~~musht~~ ^{SMOOTH AS BUTTER} that coasted past his hardened palate but wrung tears from her with its pungency. He would shoot up one sparse eyebrow at her hairstyle, or clutch his beard at her decollete; he had struck down her ~~tries~~ ^{EFFORTS} at conversation and so nurtured her inhibitions that when finally they wrapped him in expensive brocades and laid him in the family tomb, she was quite lost.

The Family mistook it for mourning and took quite kindly to her. The aunts at Jerusalem and Capernaum thought of this and that and agreed ^{THAT} on their young ~~kinsman~~ ^{WOULD MAKE A GOOD HUSBAND FOR DEAR MARY.} kinsman, Nicodemus. ^{IDEA OF MARRYING} And even when, in defiance of tradition and The Family, Mary had put down a well turned foot on the ~~suit~~ ^{NICODEMUS,} of that personable, and really likeable, young councillor, the Family was yet smugly content that, indeed, Stephen's was a holy memory. ^{STILL} ^{TO HIS WIDOW.} ^{THE} ~~The~~ ^{THE} ~~ghostly~~ ^{THE} truth was being ~~fully withheld~~ ^{fully withheld}: for Mary, enough was enough.

But, a morning came when one of the Capernaum aunts, on a visit to her mourning in-law, unexpectedly pushed open a door — and recoiled in horror.

There, before a bust of Stephen on a cabinet, was Mary, a wrap about her night-robe, posturing and declaiming:

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there. Make my bed in hell and thou art there —"

When Mary broke off ~~the psalm~~ and whirled, at the strangled cry behind her, the Capernaum aunt was already fleeing the house of blasphemy. Mary had glanced down at the floor, a thoughtful smile playing about her mouth. Then, carefully, she picked up Stephen and pulling out the bottom drawer of the cabinet, buried him deep behind her shifts. That day, she

took young John and a lunch basket to ~~underneath~~ the trees beyond the brook where she hitched her skirt and taught the boy how to knock off ground doves from cover.

An hour must have passed since she had locked the door behind him. He had been very serious, almost severe, about the door being kept locked. It should be opened only at his special rap, John had told her — a double and a single, ~~hard~~ ^{hard} rap. Mind, listen for that ^{rap} ~~hard one~~. He had been deadly serious, no matter that he had invested it with a ^{boy's} ~~boy's~~ love a wry pride in the for dramatics. There was ~~some~~ smile with which she acknowledged that it was quick of him to understand so readily the sort of fire his mother had been playing with.

But she was frightened. ^{Pacing the floor, her arms ~~to~~ HUGGING HER BODY TIGHTLY SHE} ~~She knew it. She knew it by the way her paces of the floor~~ halted at once, when she ^a ~~heard~~ the sound outside in David Street. ^{She} ~~She broke herself out of~~ it by a ~~conscious effort~~, ran across the room ^{to} ~~and peered down through~~ the half closed blinds. A platoon of soldiers was tramping up the terraced slopes of the street. They gave her a spell of acute worry, but a moment's ~~steady~~ reflection convinced her that no marching legionnaires, crumping over the cobbles on nail-studded sandals, could surprise and capture John Mark. She watched them melt into the darker end of the street and was turning away from the window when she ~~saw~~ saw something else which held her still. It was a shadow detaching itself from the deeper shadows of the wall across the street; then it turned into a figure, a man, a soldier whose bronze helmet and shoulder pieces glittered once before he passed out of her line of vision somewhere immediately below the window. Holding her robe close about her, she ran ~~all the way~~ out of the room ~~and~~ down the stairs to the door.

The chain at the door was a little difficult because of her trembling fingers, but ~~she~~ she had it undone soon after he had whispered her name ^{through} ~~beyond~~ the closed panels. He relocked the door himself and turned to face her. He said:

"You heard?"

His fists were rested on his hips and the ~~officer's~~ bracelets at his wrists arrogantly pronounced his rank. Her eyes moved slowly up the brown and sinewy forearms, past the short-sleeved jerkin and lifted to his face. They looked at each other.

"Yes, Janus," she said calmly. "I heard."

They looked at each other, guardedly, while the seconds fell away. Nearing a full

minute, Janus shrugged, ^{opened} released his fists ~~into hands~~ and dropped them at his side.

"I am not blaming you," Mary said quietly as before.

He frowned and stared hard at her. "Not blaming me for what?"

She turned and moved away. "For not letting me know he would be arrested tonight. You are right, I would have warned him."

He was at her side in a stride when they entered the intimate little room into which she led him. It was her work- and favourite room and there were sewing baskets and bits of materials pegged out on easels or strewn on chairs, and paint pots with camel's hair brushes stuck in them. He had removed his helmet when he entered the room, tore it savagely from his head. His face was pale under the ~~rough~~ rumpled hair. He turned her roughly to him.

"You little fool — do you realise the risk you would have taken? The Temple is going all the way this time! Even now, you are not out of danger!"

She waited, unflinching, until he became aware of the strength of his grip on her wrist. He released her quickly, mumbling ~~a~~ a confused apology.

"I am not worried about myself, Janus," she said gently.

He jerked his head back in a short laugh, empty of humour. "Go on. Be brave. Say you would do it again."

"No." She shook her head. "Not if I knew I would be endangering — others."

sourly:
He said ~~like~~ "Like your precious cousin?"

"You are entirely right. He is my cousin and he is precious."

"Don't be a fool," he snapped. "Nicodemus might have been tolerant — up to a point.

But are you forgetting he is a member of the Sanhedrin? Where do you think he stands now since — when was it? Two days ago? — since that crazy Nazarene had his crew ~~throw~~ ^{THREW} the money changers from the Temple? Do you think it is love for your god which will make old Annas hound this ~~Jesus~~ ^{JESUS} to the cross?"

He ~~had~~ succeeded in frightening her, ~~out of her studied calm~~. Her hands leaped to her cheeks, her eyes widened ~~and~~ searched his face in horror.

"The — cross? But — but — Annas has no power to do this!"

He stepped abruptly away from her and fiddled with one of the brushes in the porcelain pot. His eyes were moody as he ~~raised~~ raised the brush and watched the ~~crimson~~ paint flow from the bristles back into the pot, out, and plop ~~again~~ ^{again} in ~~shortened~~ ^{ONLY LENGTHENING} falls. He spoke ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~idly~~.

"He is charged with sedition, not with a breach of any religious law. Annas has arranged it so he will be sentenced by a Roman court. Under our law, his associates at the time the felony was committed will be equally guilty. That may come to mean — anyone."

She understood him. It was so clear and simple. The panic of a moment ago was forgotten. Forward, now, there awaited two, perhaps three, lives to untangle, ^{TO PLACE IN SAFETY AWAY} ~~and~~ from her own.

"Where is John?" she asked suddenly.

It took a little while for Janus' mind to clear. "John? O, I haven't seen him. Why?"

But she had gone past him. "They have lodged him in the fortress?"

Janus opened his mouth stupidly. "Wha —?" Then he shouted angrily: "Whom are you talking about?"

Mary wrinkled her forehead. "Jesus, of course. I asked you quite distinctly whether he was lodged in Antonia. There is no need to shout ~~at me~~." ^{at me}

Janus shook his head ~~wearily~~ wearily. Women really were. They were. "I took him to Annas' palace. Governor's orders," he said shortly.

Her head went back. The shock of it drained her face of colour and made her fumble for words. "You — you — no, no!" She pressed her fingers to her ^{LIPS.} temples. ~~lips~~

He nodded gloomily. "I took in your Prophet. He threatened to queer old Annas' revenue by scaring off his money changers. But ^{it was} ~~he chose~~ the wrong time to do it — while the Governor's in Jerusalem for the Passover and when my gentle uncle needs the goodwill of the Temple. So I am put in to save the Republic."

Her eyes were ~~unhappily~~ hurt. She shook her head bewilderedly. "But — you!"

He dropped the levity from his tone and spoke quietly to her: "I had hardly ever even seen ~~him~~ ^{the Nazarene}. You cannot expect me to feel as you do. I love you, Mary. You know that. I would spare you any pain, but I am a soldier. I made it as easy as I could for ~~him~~ ^{your Prophet} even to allowing ~~his disciples~~ ^{HIS DISCIPLES} to escape after one of them had used his sword on a ~~constable~~ ^{ON A FELLOW FROM} of the Temple."

She stared at him, dazed ~~by~~, as if what he told her was beyond her comprehension.

Janus spoke sharply, ~~for he was becoming annoyed~~: "Pull yourself together, Mary.

Its all over and done with."

"All over and done with!"

So it is, he thought. That part of it, anyway. And please be sensible, Mary.

"So it is; and I am not altogether sorry. The dangers you have been courting from

those scheming priests, by your association with those reckless fools, have been of some concern to me. Be thankful you are safely out of it."

She had recovered to the extent that she smiled and reached for his hand on the paint brush. Gently, she disengaged his hold and replaced the brush in the pot.

"You will be getting red daubs all over your uniform if you continue playing with this thing," she said. She cleared a place on the couch for both of them. "Sit down, Janus. Its all over and done and I am thankful I am safe."

He looked at her suspiciously, ~~as he sat~~. "I don't like your tone," he growled, ^{as he sat.} "You didn't mean what you said. What do you really mean?"

She laughed lightly. "Tell me again you love me. Tell me of wonderful Rome and the places you will take me when we are married. Tell me of the Circus and the forests of marble columns in the Forum, the music, dancing, the beautiful women —" she broke off, her eyes sombre. She said contritely: "Forgive me, Janus. Or rather, forgive me this mood — I — I —" she stopped and bit her lip.

"What is it, Mary?" he asked gently.

Her eyes were starred with tears, but he knew she would not permit them to well over. She was gallant and lovely and he ^{DESIRED} wanted her. But she was also understanding and she knew what his career meant to him and his family. She knew how unwise it would be for him to marry a Jewess without permission from Rome. It would ^{WAS BREAK} shatter his promotion and cast him out to some obscure post for disappointment and squalor to break his heart.

A generation ago, his family had been caught up ^{by} in one of those maelstrom of intrigues, which, from time to time, in Imperial courts, ^{ed} sucked down to oblivion one college of nobles and ^{ed} spewed up another. His, had managed to save themselves at the edge; but their withdrawal to firm ground was not yet ^{ACCOMPLISHED.} ~~being done~~. Vulgarly, Janus thought, they were ^{HIS FAMILY WAS} still ^{ENGAGED} ~~doing a~~ ^{by} hasty backward scramble.

"They all had supper here tonight," Mary said quietly. "Before it was ended, one of them — Judas, the youngest one, with the fair hair, you remember him? ^{VERY REBELLIOUS. BUT HE} He used to take John to hunt coneys whenever the band was in Jerusalem. It's strange, Janus, very strange. Strange it should be Judas. Anyway, he left and, soon after, Jesus and the others also went. But scarcely ten minutes later, Judas returned with some soldiers, ^{commanded} ~~led~~ by that horrible Gui — Gui —"

"Guiseppe Zellini?" Janus said, leaning forward, his eyes keen on her face.

"Yes, Guiseppe Zellini. Of course, they weren't here. But Judas knew — knew where they have been sleeping each night since the Temple assumed open hostility. How — why — how did you come to — to —?"

She left the question hanging but Janus did not enlighten her. His eyes had hardened
Zellini
thought. He was thinking of Zellini; officially, ~~he~~ was the centurion assigned to the
ple by the garrison commander. He was trying to recall something about Guiseppe Zellini.

"... Then John ~~came~~ returned and told me. He thinks we are in for trouble, so he
t to look for you. Where is he?" she asked sharply.

Janus came out of his brown study. "En? What's that? Where is whdm?"

"John — my son," Mary said impatiently. "Where is he? Why ~~isn't he~~ with you?"

Janus stared blankly at her. "Why should he ~~be~~ with me?"

"He left to find you. I thought he had ~~found~~ you."

He shook his head, rose absently. "No — I drove here from the Governor's. I left

the vehicle at the corner as ~~ixxxmxxxx~~ usual. Too hard on the animals
and the woodwork to negotiate your peculiar street of steps."

~~XX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ It was not "as usual" at all. He had come in furtively,
not as usual. O, Janus you too! You are a Roman and it seems that
among the pagans, pride comes before love. As for me, I would go
with you to the furthest corner of the world, even to — what was the
name of that cold island which Janus had said was being discussed
~~for~~ in Rome as the next place to conquer?

"Some fool with more wealth ~~than~~ than ~~is~~ sense was with Jesus in
the garden tonight. He left a cloak in our hands when he ran away.
None of the disciples would have afforded such a cloak. Anyway, to
make conversation, I told Annas, showed him the cloak. The old fellow
seemed to pounce on it. I have no idea why he is so anxious but the
joke ~~a~~ has been turned back on me. It seems the only role I have in
Jerusalem for the foreseeable future is to find the ~~xxx~~ fellow to
whom the cloak belongs." He thought awhile. "Him, or my neck. An-
nas is calling down heavy forces." He looked seriously at her. "Lis-
ten, tonight, keep your doors locked. I am sending Quartus to stay
here. He will see you are not annoyed by the search parties."

Britannia, she thought triumphantly. That was the name of the
dreary little island Rome was getting ready to subdue. Janus had told
her about it. Said he could be sent ~~their~~ there with the colonising
army. She was sorry for Janus. She knew he loved her but he was a
soldier, a pagan soldier. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Should she trust him?

"Please send John back to me. He will be at the fortress, most
likely. Wherever the excitement is."

Quartus or no, she had to contact Nicodemus. Under the Jewish
law, Jesus would be examined by the Sanhedrin.

CHAPTER 6

They squatted in the same rough circle on the cobbles, in the chair-court where John Mark had left them. Simon Peter's sword rested in his lap and he gripped the hilt in both hands until his knuckles whitened. *The lantern flickered on the ground.*

^{PEOPLE} "They will say he has failed them," Thomas said flatly.

^{SNORTED. THOMAS;} ~~He heard Simon Peter breathing loudly through his nose and he~~ shrugged and went on.

"They will say that within a week, he has failed them. They will say that only a week ago, they had led the crowd across the Kedron to meet him, and led the hosannas as they returned with him riding the donkey into the city. And yet, within a week, he has failed them."

~~"You son of a bitch."~~ Simon Peter's lips were taut and the words ^{fell} ~~let~~ ^{like pebbles} separately,

^{like a fish?} "He is your own kinsman. Will you leave him there, on the hook? Do you want us to leave him there on the hook?"

Thomas drew his cloak about him and calmly spat on the cobbles. "They will say he came in under false pretences. They will say he had led them to think he would take Jerusalem from the Romans and ^{And that now he has changed.} ~~give it back to the Jews.~~ ^{CHANGED. THAT THREE} ~~But that,~~ ^{HAD} ~~three~~ days ago, he told them instead they should pay taxes to Caesar. That day before yesterday, he told them instead that their God loved all men alike, Roman or Jew. And ^{ABOVE ALL,} ~~that~~ only yesterday, he predicted to them that Jerusalem would be destroyed. ^{At} Jerusalem, the holy city of the nation. They will say all these. And they will be speaking the truth."

Peter's big body jerked and the hilt of the sword rattled at the mouth of its scabbard. "Should I ram this sword down your throat? ²⁷ You want me to pin your gills?"

"I am only telling you what the Zealots will say," Thomas replied, unshaken. ~~"I am~~ telling you the Zealots wont help. Judas was a Zealot. That's why he did what he did."

~~old~~ Phillip asked quietly: "What do you think, Simon? You think the Zealots will help?"

"How do I know whether they will help?" Peter shouted back at him. "I say there is a chance! I say we should take the chance!"

"A chance such as a snowball might have in hell," Thomas said grimly. "Your

show better sense. By now he is burning the road back to Bethsaida

Peter turned furiously on him. "Why aint you on your way too?" he shouted. "Why dont you scuttle back to Capernaum? You're his blood cousin, aint you? That makes you another quitter, dont it? You'd say Put up the sword like he did tonight, wouldn't you?"

Big John Boanerges reared backward, twisted his head to one side and howled towards the ground: "Shut up! Shut up! You make my head ache!"

~~They had~~ They had approached the plan with resentment, driven there by Simon's ^{Peter's} passion ~~to do something~~ ^{FOR ACTION.} As a consequence, the plan was untidy.

"It ^{is} a lousy plan. A plan without a plan. It makes my head ache too, Johnny," James said to his brother. He said it in a naked voice. Old Phillip watched ~~him~~ ^{him}.

"You have a better plan, ^{JAMES} Boanerges?" Simon Peter roared. "You have a better one?"

Matthew glanced at old Phillip and then he watched Simon Peter. The old antagonists, Matthew thought. ^{PETER, JAMES AND JOHN. AND YET SO OFTEN TOGETHER.} Now they will smoke up; then they will flame up; then they will roar and ^{BEAT} ~~at~~ ^{SNARLING AND FLAKING.} each other with words, ~~Matthew thought~~ Jesus had kept them fairly sweet for the three years the band had been together. But now that the priests had got him, the ^{BAD THING WAS RISING} ~~four was coming up~~ in them, Matthew thought.

"Stop being children," Matthew said harshly. "If I know the Temple, whatever we do must be done quickly."

Phillip caught his eye and winked. "Little children," Phillip wheezed. The ascension through the heat and dust of the lake plains to the chillier Jerusalem ~~night~~ nights had wakened his asthma. "Little children — he always called us that, young as he was. He was a real Rabbi, young as he was. Little children, love ye one another —"

"Shut up I say!" John howled at the ground in a strangled voice, his head beating from side to side. "Shut shut shut up up up!"

Thomas stared at Phillip. Stared hard, the pupils of his eyes widening. "Good God!" he ejaculated softly. "Already we speak of ^{as} him in the past — as one dead!"

John ~~Boanerges~~ Boanerges held his head and groaned. ["Simon?" Matthew called

loud ^{ly} as if he knew of no crisis and had never heard of one. "Simon Peter? Who will go into Annas' palace? John? ^{James} ~~John~~ here? Me?"

Or old Phillip with his asthma, or that fool Thomas or me, Simon Peter. Six of us left. Five are ~~running away~~ on the roads running away from Jerusalem. One is rich with his blood money and skulking somewhere out of our reach. Six of us left and all of us wanting to run too — excepting, perhaps, old Phillip whom his asthma will kill soon anyway; and perhaps this Matthew who couldn't return to Galilee since he would be in reach of Herod — and Herod would not forget how he had absconded his service as a good revenue runner to join the Nazarene's party.

"Ask James ^{BOANERGES,} ~~Simon~~ Simon Peter returned ^{mockingly.} ~~and~~ ^{"JAMES THE THUNDERER"} ~~James~~ ^{brothers INCHED} ~~Thunder~~ has a better plan." A brushing ^{OF ROBS} ~~whisper~~ ^{H SAT} ~~from~~ their clothing when they ~~sat~~ ^{SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS AS THEY WERE, HE COULD ONLY GUESS THAT} forward, ~~and~~ Matthew stirred uneasily. He wished he ~~was~~ ^{NOW} beside old Phil. He would have poked old Phil in the side telling him to be ready for trouble, and old Phil would have found something to say which would break the tension ~~which was~~ ^{SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS AS THEY WERE, HE COULD ONLY GUESS THAT} building. ~~He guessed~~ ^{SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS AS THEY WERE, HE COULD ONLY GUESS THAT} the clear, grey light in ^{WERE BEING} ~~James'~~ ^{ON HIS PART} eyes ~~was~~ getting clearer, opening like windows from which the shutters ~~were~~ ^{HIS BROTHER,} ~~been~~ torn. And the same thing would be happening to John ^{too.}

Phillip ^{ON HIS PART} heard the whisper of the clothing and knew the brothers' violence was being ^{AWAKENED} ~~wakened~~ against Peter. He guessed that James would go for Peter. And that would make John ^{SPRING} ~~dash~~ forward from his ~~too~~ ^{HAUNCHES} ~~too~~, for the brothers were like that. And then Matthew would ^{GOING FORWARD} ~~be~~ ^{THAT} ~~too~~, reaching for John. Because it was ~~not~~ ^{WEAKNESS WAS EXPOSED. BY THAT HE MEANT THE BAND BEING ALREADY HALFWAY BROKEN UP.} that Matthew had more love for Peter, but Matthew had been a government man and knew the lunacy of civil strife, ^{ESPECIALLY} ~~when your~~ ^{WEAKNESS WAS EXPOSED. BY THAT HE MEANT THE BAND BEING ALREADY HALFWAY BROKEN UP.} ~~weakness~~ ^{THAT} ~~were~~ ^{THAT} ~~to the~~ ^{THAT} ~~words~~ ^{THAT} Then there would be four of them at each other's throat, leaving

Thomas and himself. And Thomas and himself would be no good for ~~what was to be done~~ before morning; for one, ^{FUNNY THOMAS,} ~~was~~ ^{HIMSELF,} ~~only a~~ ^{too old and afraid.} ~~good~~ ^{too old and afraid.} ~~joker~~ ^{too old and afraid.} and the other ~~was~~ ^{too old and afraid.} ~~too old and afraid.~~ ^{too old and afraid.} ~~James~~ ^{TO GO.} ~~is the right man,~~ Phillip said loudly. "I agree with you, Simon. ~~James~~ ^{JAMES IS} ~~is~~ ^{TO GO.} the man. But the question is: Will she let him in?"

Old Phil ^{UP MOVED HIS} ~~held his~~ ^{CLOSER TO} ~~head~~ ^{A SMALL UNTRUTH.} the lantern, at an angle where his eyes would show sly and leery, and devoutly hoped that God would forgive him. Matthew saw him, and a grim smile touched his lips as he sat back on his haunches. Old Phil was in there alright. He watched John's head swing towards Old Phil, followed more slowly by his brother's and Simon's. He sensed the quick searching of their minds and their puzzle.

"Whom are you talking about, Phil?" Matthew asked loudly.

Phillip chuckled ^{KNOWINGLY} ~~and~~ and again did a quick prayer. "Leah — that black-eyed beauty from Antioch who answers the door at Annas' palace. She has been visiting old Zebedee's ~~restaurant~~ stall in the fish-market twice a day since we ^{RETURNED} ~~have come back~~ to Jerusalem. I know it couldn't be old Zeb she comes to see, so I guess it must be ^{JAMES} ~~Jim~~ or ZJohnny." He paused and chuckled.

Simon swore rudely. ^{"SLIP"} ~~He~~ Slip your killick and get on with ~~the~~ what you are saying."

Phillip cocked a mildly innocent eye in his direction. "You figured that while we were making contact with the Zealots you would endeavour to find out what's going on at Annas' palace. ^{RIGHT?} But now you figure that Jim's the right man ~~to gain entrance, eh? Well,~~ ^{to gain entrance, eh? Well,} ~~Jim,~~ "Could you?"

He turned his head quickly to James. "Could I — what?" countered James softly.

Phillip learnt, a little late, that he had succeeded in turning James' anger to himself. He hoped that Matthew would see that he had turned James' anger to himself.

"He's a lonely man tonight," Matthew said suddenly. "Jesus is the loneliest man in Jerusalem tonight." ^[PHILLIP WAS GLAD THAT MATTHEW HAD BEEN SHARP. MATTHEW WAS MAKING CONVERSATION. JOHN TURNED ON MATTHEW.]

~~John sprang savagely on him~~ "Shut your trap — you ~~are~~ Herodian leech!" He sprang to his feet. "I will do it — do you hear? I will go! He will not be alone among that slimy crew! I — I will go into the palace!"

Thomas threw a nervous glance over his shoulder to the mouth of the tiny court.

"You will bring down the soldiers on us with your yelling," he complained worriedly.

Simon Peter stood up. He unbuckled his sword. "We will go together," he told John.

Phillip ^{GINGERLY ACCEPTED} ~~took~~ the sword. ^{HE DID NOT LIKE WEAPONS.} ~~gingerly~~ Across the light of the lantern, his eyes sought Matthew's. ~~unwillingly~~ With a jerky gesture, he passed the weapon to James.

Thomas threw out one of his jokes. "That's right, Simon. Don't take it with you. Malchus might recognize it as the one which nibbled ~~at~~ his ear in the Garden tonight."

James put the sword inside the ^{BELT} ~~band~~ at his waist and turned a light pair of eyes on Thomas. "You are unimportant," he said, ^{coldly.} "Go ~~away~~ ^{count your toes.}"

Thomas shook his head and looked at Matthew. "Matt," he said, "I am as popular as a revenue runner. We ought to be by ourselves some other place."

Simon Peter said hoarsely: "Everybody knows what to do. We'll meet again, here, before morning."

They all stood, Phillip last of all for his chest ached. They looked at each quickly, furtively, and looked away again, anywhere. Matthew said suddenly: "If any would come after me, let him take up his cross and walk out of the city with me."

Matthew didn't know why this had come out. It wasn't as before when he had stirred John for old Phil. *SO MANY OF JESUS' WORDS WERE COMING OUT TONIGHT. AS IF HE WAS ALREADY DEAD. HE SHIVERED.*

Phillip held up his hand and said: "Please, Matthew," then let it fall *USELESSLY* ~~again~~ *AT HIS SIDE.* ~~is there no more use for it.~~ A single loud sob escaped from John. He bent far over, cutting off his breath and straightened again with a sigh.

"Cant someone bring me Judas?" he groaned, his palms turned upward. "Cant someone give Judas to me?"

James reached around behind Matthew and rested his hand on his brother's shoulder. Suddenly Simon Peter whirled *AND SLIPPED FORWARD* to the entrance of the court and Matthew swiftly ducked the lantern beneath his cloak. *THEY HEARD* ~~Almost simultaneously~~ *CHUCKLED. THEY* Simon ~~looked to them to~~ *SHOW THE LIGHT AGAIN.*

"Its alright, lads," *PETER SAID.* "Its the Coxswain. Good God, Cox, aint you tired of this same old game?"

The grip on his ~~shoulder~~ ^{was} shoulder ~~seemed~~ unnecessary, for John Mark walked quietly enough ~~up~~ to the group. However, his feet did drag a little and his face was sullen.

Thomas grinned and said: "I don't believe my eyes. Let me see if it's really he."

He punched him lightly in the stomach. The boy licked his lips and said: "You'd better dim that lantern. There are soldiers in David Street."

John Boanerges asked quickly: "Why are they searching for us in this neighbourhood? Don't they know none of us could be living in this posh district?"

"It's not —" John Mark stopped. He added sullenly: "You'd better dim that light."

"Do as the Cox says, lad," Simon Peter broke in. "He's talking sense. ~~He~~ ^{JAMES}, you go to the corner and see where they're heading. If they turn in here, we'll scatter and ~~make~~ run for it."

~~James~~ slipped from the courtyard. Peter said: "Alright, Cox. Now tell us why you've come back. Where were you heading for when you pushed off so fast?"

"I was going to ^{FORTRESS} Antonia," the boy grumbled.

"Antonia?" they exclaimed.

John Mark had bolted in panic when he saw the soldiers at his cousin, ~~James~~ ^{NICODEMUS?} house. ~~He~~ ^{HE HAD MADE A SCRAMBLING RUN} scrambled up the street, ~~feeling~~ ^{FEELING} like a beetle which had strayed into a barnyard ^{OF FOWLS}. He could not escape the line of hard ^{ROMAN} beaks ^{THAT} were closing in on him. Then he had remembered his one time friends, ~~and had~~ ^{CAME} ~~thankfully received~~ the birth of an idea. But he had to play it carefully.

Simon Peter shook his head. "I can't cope with you, Cox. Honest, I can't. I'm just an ignorant fisherman. If I'm ^{SO} scared to go into Annas' palace, likely I'd die of fright if I had to ^{PASS} Antonia. Why were you going to the Fortress?"

"I was —" John Mark began.

~~Quietly~~ Matthew took the lantern from under his cloak and suddenly poured its brilliance on John Mark's face. The boy blinked and became angry. Then, remembering that his plans called not for anger, but for a seeming reluctance, he scowled suspiciously and glowered around at them from under his lowered eyelids. Matthew replaced the lantern under his cloak and Phillip laughed silently under cover of the dark. He thought he saw through the tax-collector's nimble mind.

"I was -- what?" prompted John Boanerges.

FIRST CAPTAIN,
~~centurion~~

The boy spoke slowly after a short pause. "I was going to see the ~~centurion~~ Janus Aurelius."

A lapping and a gurgling in a nearby ~~river~~ ^{MARKED} aqueduct ~~entered~~ the puzzled silence.

Then: "Hey --! He would turn us all in!" Thomas cried in mock alarm. "He's going to finish the job for his friend Judas!"

"Bend a knot in that long tongue of yours," Simon Peter told him rudely. Gently, he asked the boy: "What for? Why were you going to the ~~centurion~~ ^{JANUS AURELIUS?}"

"She -- why should I tell you?" John Mark cried, ~~resentment~~ ^{resentfully he hoped.} He hoped ~~it~~ it had sounded resentful enough.

"Because your mother has been patron and friend to us and we don't aim to see a wooden headed boy bring no trouble on her," ^{PETER SAID.} ~~That's why.~~ "Now, talk. She -- what?"

"She -- my mother thinks he will help," John Mark said reluctantly.

"And so she sends you -- a boy," Matthew remarked, ^{DRIVELY.} "A small hammer with which to crack the walls of Rome."

"A small hammer, but, by God, she has taken up a hammer," John Boanerges grated.

"Why did not she go herself?" Simon Peter asked.

"O, big and stupid Galilleean!" flashed John Mark. "Can a lone woman walk the streets of Jerusalem after dark? Is she a harlot from the theatres of Antioch?"

"Cox," Phillip said behind a wheezing chuckle, "he said he could not cope with you tonight. Tell me, though, your mother knows this ~~centurion~~ ^{FIRST CAPTAIN} well?"

John grunted. The fish-stand kept by his father was also a good clearing house for gossip. "Both she and Nicodemus, her cousin, are his friends. But I don't see any help coming from that quarter."

Once, Simon Peter would have soundly cracked John Mark's head for his rudeness.

Between them, it had always been the large mastiff and the playful puppy, ever since the day when ~~Jesus~~ ^{THE NAZARENE} had rebuked him ~~when he would have switched~~ ^{FOR SWITCHING AT} the boy ~~and~~ ^{WHO WAS} attempting to slip through the legs of the band as they stood around their ~~leader~~ ^{BRETHREN} ~~to keep~~ ^{JESUS, KEEPING} the ~~crowd's~~ ^{CROWD'S} pressure ~~off the crowd~~ ^{OFF} him. But tonight was bitter, ~~and Jesus had gone out of him.~~ ^{NIGHT. HE WAS NOT HIMSELF. THE} ~~Jesus~~ ^{NAZARENE} had said he should be the leader if anything ~~ever~~ ^{WAS HE ANY} happened, ~~to him.~~ ^{TO HIM.} But, ~~he was a~~ ^{NOW THAT A KINGFISH WAS REQUIRED!} leader? O, what a ~~weak~~ ^{MINNOW} ~~good~~ ^{OF A} leader he was! A leader with a loused up mind that couldn't think ~~for himself.~~ ^{STRAIGHT.} He was to haul nets. That's all. ~~That's all.~~ ^{MADE} ~~That's all.~~ ^{WAS} ~~That's all.~~ ^{AN IGNORANT FISHERMAN.}

"Blow it to ^{TO} ~~hell~~!" ^{PETER.} ~~he~~ swore ~~loudly~~. "I'll take help from any quarter, John ^{NY} Thunder. Cox, we'll get your mother through to the fortress. Maybe — maybe she can help."

John Mark jerked his head up. They could not see how his eyes shone. "Who will take her through?" ~~You, Simon Peter?~~ he queried quickly.

"Beggars are not choosers, my grubby little friend," Thomas said.

"I want Phillip to take her," John Mark said defiantly. "Phillip must take her."

"You'll get your Phillip," Simon said curtly.

Phillip gave ^{another} ~~a~~ wheezing chuckle. "But it shall not be Phillip," he said dryly.

"Anyone can hear me coming a mile away. I strongly recommend my friend Matthew to you, John Mark. He's entirely trustworthy."

"Yes, John Mark," Thomas put in. "You ask old Herod about his Matthew. He'll give you letters."

"For God's sake — stop hauling your bilge!" John ~~Beaumes~~ ^{Thomas.} yelled at ~~him~~ "Let's do what we have to do. Matthew can take her — he won't be missed anyway!"

Matthew moved forward to the boy. "I won't be missed. ~~John~~ John is right," he said. ^{"MAYBE THE} ~~Zealots~~ Zealots would not listen to an old government man telling them to rescue a prisoner from the authorities, ^{but} I can pretty well get his mother to Antonia without being seen by the soldiers."

~~"Well,"~~ "Be off then," John ~~Beaumes~~ growled unrepentantly.

John Mark was twisting his head about in angry indecision. He had hoped old Phillip would have been chosen. He could have handled old Phillip. But this Matthew was an unknown quantity. He smelled of ~~impure~~ Law and the Temple, no matter that he was now one of the Twelve. ~~However,~~ He was not old Phillip. Old Phillip would do what he was told when they reached Antonia. Suppose this one wouldn't?

But he had no time for protest for Matthew had taken his arm and was urging him out of the court. ~~They passed James Beaumes at watch at the corner and entered David Street.~~

He slouched ~~along~~ ^{moved} along behind Matthew, thinking sullenly he had been a fool to come to them. Nevertheless, he grunted a grudging admiration for the way Matthew ~~like~~ like a ghost. If, tomorrow morning on the Wall, he could be a ghost like Matthew, that

THERE IS NO PAGE 44

is, until it was time to spring up and set all the garrison on the Wall by the ears, and all the priests welcoming the new day with their brass horns by the ears, and ^{SET} all the chairmen and the hucksters down below by the ears, and put his life into the keeping of ~~his~~ muscles and ~~his~~ lungs and ^{THE} good use of his brain when required — ~~until that moment~~ if he could be a ghost ^{UNTIL THAT MOMENT, AS MATTHEW THE SMART TAX COLLECTOR WAS,} ~~as this man at his side,~~ then he would well be on the way to beating the sneering Saul.

Right at this moment, crossing the pavement before Ben-Rasha's house, who kept plump cats and was rumoured to eat them, and had three coal black sisters from Phoenicia to serve his person and there were rumours about them too — right at this moment, by the stoop ^{that} of bald, old Ben-Rasha's house, there was nothing he wanted more than to best ~~the~~ sneering Saul.

No. He shook his head angrily. He bulged his cheeks with air ^{for emphasis}, blew it out like a grampus and shook his head again. Must not think about Saul. Tomorrow is a million years away. Must think about mother. About mother and that ^{IT ISN'T} ~~old Phillip~~ ^{who ascends David Street with him now.} If, when they got to Antonia, ~~the confusion~~ ^{IT WASN'T} ~~was not there, he would remember right enough~~ ^{wasn't} old Phillip ^{BE} by his side.

And another thing. How would he break the news to his mother that Janus was not what ^{as they issued from Demmy's house,} they'd hoped? For, despite the light at ~~the~~ their backs, he was sure he'd recognised that it was Quartus, Janus' man, who led the raiding party which was at this moment, hunting the members of his family.

CHAPTER 8

Annas was taking it badly. The interrogation was not going as well as he expected. He had met stubborn prisoners before. It was easy to understand that men who openly opposed a government, could never, never be weaklings. Particularly a government with enough scope to arrange for your finality. And right now, his government had such scope.

It was true that under Roman law, Pontius Pilate ruled all of Judea. But Pontius Pilate had overreached himself; and, for the present at least, he was forced to allow a lot of scope to the wily old priest.

While he glared at the stubborn prisoner, Annas docketed ~~some~~ in his head, some cohorts of the reasons why he was allowed such scope. Pilate had marched his ~~legions~~ through the city with their standards ^{FLYING} in contempt of the injunction against graven images in Jerusalem. And Rome heard. Pilate had ~~drawn~~ ^{forcefully} drawn on the Temple treasury for the upkeep of his magnificent palace, when he should have kept within the allowance granted him by the Senate. And Rome heard. Pilate had pushed Jerusalem near to rebellion, when, instead of punishing the fanatical Zealots only, he had turned an insensate outburst of fury against the whole city. Rome took official cognizance of the complaints and rapped the unlucky governor across the knuckles with a stiff note of censure.

Pilate discovered then that the rich and influential ^{expatriate} Jews who lived in Rome ^{still} ~~yet~~ regarded Jerusalem as their spiritual home. He was therefore allowing the Temple a lot of scope until he could regain favour at home.

None of this was hidden matter. So Annas had no doubt that this prisoner knew his power. Now he passed his bony hand over his tight lips and wondered whether it was a congenital stupidity which made his prisoner so silent and serene. He nodded. Sometimes God made the stupid ones like that. Sometimes, He may have put a luminosity just under their skins so their faces glowed. But — no. These eyes resting directly on him seemed to be full of — pity. It was without logic to think so, but it — seemed so. It battered at his mind. You — pitying — me? The blood rushed into his head.

His lips whitened ^{as they} ~~and~~ thinned and the cords at his neck stretched TAUTLY

and ~~taunted~~ until, startlingly, his head swayed widely, ~~once~~.

"You ^{FOOL} ~~stammering~~ ^{ed} the High Priest said and it was as if the hate was lifting a roof from his voice. "You should have remain among the fishermen at Galilee. You should not have come to Jerusalem. You should have stayed with your disciples. ~~where are they now?~~" ~~the prisoner~~

If he had replied, humbly, Annas believed he would have ordered that his wrists be untied. The ^{slender} ~~slight~~ frame, flanked by a couple of burly temple guards and the officer, Malchus, seemed incapable of ^{SUCH} ~~the~~ resistance ^{AS WAS} suggested by the bound hands. But ^{THE PRISONER} ~~he~~ did not reply.

Annas wanted to laugh. For a moment, he craved wildly for the unbounded opening of the mouth and the filmy exudation of moisture to slick the eyeballs which he noticed was what happened to other men when they laughed. But all he succeeded in obtaining was a sideways twitching of his mobile, sensitive mouth and he knew his eyes were dry.

I remember they told me he spoke to butts of water and they became full of wine, he thought. And that at a word from him, swine leapt over a cliff, he thought. And that he walked on the sea. And, that, at Bethany, ~~was~~ a body commencing to pus was given back life by him. ~~He~~

Such a man could not be stupid. Even if those he fooled were bumpkins of low intelligence, such a man could not be stupid. He was cunning. What he did was to prey on gullibility, he thought.

Annas leaned forward on his elbows and stared unwinkingly at the prisoner.

"Tell me," he said softly, "something of your doctrine. I know almost nothing of your doctrine — or is it a secret doctrine, only for your disciples — Teacher?"

The title had slipped out of him. He had not meant to call this young upstart by any such title. But he dismissed his annoyance when he observed how the men grinned at what they believed was his irony.

And perhaps it was just as well. For the Nazarene seemed to be contemplating a reply.

"Hidden, High Priest? No, not hidden."

THE FIRM QUIET VOICE HAD A QUALITY UNFAMILIAR TO ANNAS. THE QUALITY WAS NOT SO COMMANDING AS THAT IT LED. ANNAS FOUND HIMSELF LEANING FORWARD ON HIS CHAIR.

ALMOST AS IF HE WERE SO IN THE MIND THAT MADE HIM TERRIBLY
UNEASY AND DEEPENED HIS ANGER.

The High Priest waited. His face ^{HARDENED.} was cold, ~~and his eyes were~~

"I spoke openly to all the world, in the market place, on the caravan roads, on mountain tops, in boats on the water, in all the synagogues by which I passed, in your great Temple, here, in Jerusalem. Wherever Jews have gathered, they have heard my words. These are your witnesses, High Priest. Call your witnesses and ask them."

The blow from Malchus landed on his mouth and his head jerked under it.

"You dare to speak thus to the High Priest?" Malchus cried in rage at him.

Jesus turned and looked at Malchus. Annas waited, the unlikely smile twisting his thin lips. Now Malchus will really hit him.

But as the seconds drew out, a puzzled frown narrowed the High Priest's eyes.

I have seen prisoners bluster or cringe when Malchus ^{GAVE} it to them. This one does neither. And my big, hard Malchus, who wields the ~~stoutest~~ stoutest hand that ever sweated on the butt of a scourge, is discomfited. The calf is shuffling his feet.

"Look at me, Nazarene!" the High Priest snarled.

Why must the fool look at Malchus? Has he not heard of the power in me? That to ignore me is to flirt with his tomb? As if he is troubled at my servant's lapse, but I am a beast whose moods he knew. Who told him his eyes could afford to be gentle, ~~now~~, when I am about to destroy him? He hopes to move me to pity?

— SPACE —

He remembered, O, decades ago, when he had been a young priest and ordered to his first sacrifice. He had ~~lain~~ lain awake most of the night, prickly with apprehension, worrying whether his hand would be true on the knife. He had risen in the grey of the morning and had gone shakily forth, moving through the ancient ceremonials with the other scores of priests; listening to the chant from the pinnacle of the Temple which announced ^{MORNING HAD COME, THAT} the sky lit up as far as Hebron, ^{AND THEN HE WAS INTO HIS DUTIES,} searching the lamb for blemishes and giving it a drink from the golden cup; slipping its head through the ~~golden~~ ring of gold with its eyes turned westward; waiting for the signal from the silver trumpets when he would use the knife.

remembered how he

He had the animal's gullet under his hand and the knife held for the upthrust, when —

By reason of some vagrant wind the altar flames ^{HAD} leaned from vertical and in the new

light, the eyes of the sacrifice looked gently at him. The blade, already on its way, trembled and slowed.

But even as it slowed, he had remembered the duty he owed to the priesthood behind him and the millions of Israel who required the blood, and the knife ~~had gone~~ went in. It went in, unyieldingly, nearly ~~ruining~~ ⁱⁿ ruining the throat ~~with~~ his thoroughness.

~~His mouth was implacable, the nose pinched, he~~

He leaped to his feet. ~~His lips were pursed, implacably, the nose pinched.~~ He swayed on his feet. His eyes were painfully wide.

"Take him out and whip him, Malchus!" he whispered ^{HOARSELY.} "Scourge him ~~just~~ ^{JUST} short of ribbons!"

MARGERY: SPACE HERE

A servant entered the room and bobbed nervously until Annas turned to him.

"The spy called the Rodent, Highness. He has come in."

Annas wiped the wet from his ^{LIPS} ~~mouth~~ with the back of his hand. It took him a little ~~while to remember~~ time to remember that he had been impatiently enquiring for the Rodent since some hours ago. He dropped back to his seat and nodded.

THE FOOL JUDAS. ALL THIS WAS HIS ~~DOING~~ DOING. THE FOOL HAD WEAKENED. HE REFUSED TO BEAR A FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THE NAZARENE. HE HAD EVEN ^{GIVEN BACK} ~~THE~~ THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER THEY HAD PAID HIM TO BETRAY THE NAZARENE. THROWN IT TO THE GROUND IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL. THE IDIOT HAD NOT KNOWN IT WAS EXPEDIENT THAT ONE MAN SHOULD ^{die} DIE AND NOT ^{ALL} THE ~~OTHER~~ ^{OTHER} JEWISH PEOPLE JEW IN JERUSALEM ~~AND~~ AS THEY WOULD, IF THE ROMANS BECAME SUFFICIENTLY DISGUSTED WITH THEIR ENDLESS PLOTTING AND SCHEMING AGAINST THE RULER VERY WELL. HE WOULD, AS HE USED TO, DEPEND ON HIS OWN WELL PAID SPIES.

MASSACRES OF JEWS WERE AS COMMON IN AS HISTORY ^{AS} THE DEATH OF KINGS.

Chapter 9

Matthew had ^{MOVED IN} gone to the front and his mother had fallen in behind Matthew, as if she did this every night, and it had made him proud. Proud, ^{OF} ~~as he in turn fell in behind~~ at the way she turned her head for the similar quick look with which Matthew and he swept the street, and ^{OF} how she ~~had~~ walked, ~~forward~~ on her heels, not silly as how some women would have done it, walking forward on their toes, not knowing that the surest way to stumble and make a noise was to try walking on your toes when you needed silence. She was a mother to be proud of; and after this she could go coney-hunting with him anytime. Anytime at all she wanted to.

They made good progress through the ~~dark~~ dark street and they took precautions against surprises, ^{PUTTING OUT HIS HAND} by Matthew ~~reaching out~~ behind him to touch his mother's hand, and she in turn ^{REACHING BEHIND FOR HER SON'S HAND} pressing ~~his hand in her own~~ and then they stood still, listening. A small wind had come up and it played ^{TRICKS} ~~some sort of game~~ with dead twigs, ^{SCRATCHING ALONG} ~~scattered~~ the pavement, and crickets ^{WALLS, CRICKETS} in the broken wall shrilled, ^{THEIR FEET} ~~whispered~~ sometimes and ~~that was all~~. Matthew had chosen a good road to Antonia and there was nothing to worry about. John Mark returned to weaving his ~~web~~ ^{plans for the JAFFA GATE.}

It kept coming back to him. How he could beat Saul. He would mount to the Wall as Saul had done, under cover of the before-dawn dark. But there, all resemblance between them would end. From there, he would show them. He would not rise to his feet until the sun was scorching Hebron. He would make them sweat down there, ^{FEARING} ~~with fear~~ for him. On top of the Wall, he would tweak Caesar's nose and make the sneering Saul sweat with fear for him. They would look up at him and know he might be killed any moment; and it would sweat the sneer off of Saul. He would be eyeing his pursuers, but he would keep one eye open to see old Saul sweating. He stumbled into his mother.

"Hold up, clumsy," came Matthew's gruff whisper. "There's your Antonia."

And beyond Antonia was the gate. He would not be going into Antonia. If Matthew chose to think he was going into Antonia then Matthew was a bigger fool than Phillip. He commenced to think fast on how he would handle the business of getting his mother ^{CITY} through the gate and out of Jerusalem.

The end of the narrow lane, in which they stood, opened into a wider street. ~~peering~~ peering around Matthew's shoulder, she could see the lighted area where the fortress steps descended into the court of Gentiles. She had never been into this section of the Temple area before. A faint reflection from the torches on the steps of the fortress touched the mouth of the lane, ~~and they could see each other's faces.~~ ^{INTO THE} She drew back ^{AT} ~~the~~ the gentle insistence of Matthew. ^{SHH-}

"The soldiers of Rome are touchy, lady. They don't mind you staring at them when they march past in cohorts with banners flying. But if they catch you slyly peeking at them when they are only two or three of them, they will reckon you ^{ARE} ~~are~~ contemplating slipping a blade between their ribs — and rightly so," he ended dryly.

"Between the fourth and fifth rib," a voice said with relish. "That's where they die easy. You just - push it in."
^[STARTLED] Mary ^{TURNED} ~~started~~ puzzled, ~~about her, for the unknown voice~~ ^{GLANCES AROUND BUT} there ~~was nobody~~ ^{WERE NO OTHER} ~~there~~ ^{PEOPLE, ONLY} ~~themselves, in the lane, only shadows, and the shadows.~~

"Heh, heh, two inches inward at the back of the neck. They kick amusingly before they are still."

Her gown flew out as she whirled at the new voice behind her. Matthew's hand at her elbow steadied her. She frowned, angry at her self that the panic had been hers alone, for John Mark had ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~even~~ ^a moved. ^{MUSCLE.}

"Three. Three inches for some and two for others. Three for fat Pilate with his well covered neck. Two for the tiger's whelp, Janus Aurelius."

It was too much for Mary. The voices were disembodied; ^{THEY} ~~and~~ seemed to come out of the ground. "Wh - who is there?" she whispered.

~~Matthew~~ "Heh, heh," the cackle came again. "We are Legion, lady. Legion —"

"Be quiet!" Matthew ~~replied~~ threw out in a stern whisper.

Mary swallowed carefully. Beside her, she heard ~~her son calmly talking.~~ ^{her son calmly talking.} "What about Janus Aurelius? Has he passed here?" ^{he asked}

Mary tightened her lips. She had heard about these crazy jokers who called themselves Legion. With the passing of her alarm, her maternal instinct was again uppermost and it disturbed her to discover that John Mark seemed quite at ease in a noisome passage which skirted the despised court of Gentiles, ^{AND} in the middle of the night. She had failed with

the boy, somehow, somewhere. She could almost see the Capernaum aunts shrugging as they accepted her failure. Stephen's widow would be just the sort of widow who would make Stephen's son be at home in a nasty alley with all sorts of nasty people. We had said it all along, hadn't we?

"What about Janus?" Mark asked again, an edge of anger in his voice this time.

"Heh, heh, what about Janus?" a voice mimicked him.

her eyes found
She made them out at last. They squatted in the corners and two or three crawled about on all fours reaching out skinny hands to her frock, altogether under ten of them she thought. They had come without sound, like spiders. She felt sick at them and wished she could put her heel to them like spiders.

"Purveyors of filth," John Mark said quietly contemptuous, "answer me."

Mary looked and listened, a little dazed at it all. Surely she could not be standing in this ugly place and this could not be her son employing the language of chair-men with an ease she had associated only with chair-men.

"For nothing, the young Lord asks a question!" came from the ground in mocking wonder. "Who will answer the young Lord for nothing? You, Demas Legion? Naaman Legion? You, Joshua Legion? Jehu Legion? John Legion? Abram Legion?"

CHICKLES ANSWERED.

A chorus of ~~chickles~~ *chickles* ~~cried~~ *cried*. Mary felt a stir from Matthew at her side. Something tinkled on the rough stones and there was a scurry among the Legions. Soon they settled back. Matthew spoke.

"There is a companion to that one — when you have answered the young master."

"My thumb has gone over the inscription," the voice she now recognized as the leader said from the ground, "and I swear by all the oaths that ^{COIN} this is from the land of King Herod."

"Your thumb speaks a straighter language than your tongue, Legion," Matthew said curtly. *"yes, I am Matthew, formerly of HEROD'S SERVICE."* "Now that you've had your laugh, tell us what we want to know."

Bye. "King Herod?" echoed one of those on the ground. "Now who would have access to the treasury of King Herod?"

"Perhaps the keeper of the Treasury."

"Or his assistant."

"Or the assistant to the assistant."

"Or one of the tax gatherers."

"The tax gatherers of the synagogues?"

"Perhaps of the toll-gates on the caravan roads."

"This one smells of — fish," the leader said ending the swift round of comments.

Matthew chuckled and Mary realised with astonishment that he was really amused.

"Yes, we know each other ^{Ben. I AM MATTHEW, ONCE TAX-GATHERER FROM THE FISHERMEN WHO} ~~Ben.~~ I was there the day the Master cured you, but now

it seems that seven greater devils have entered into you."

"And now the tax-gatherer of ~~Ben~~ Galilee runs like a cat with a burning brand

attached under his tail," ^{Ben} ~~Ben~~ said heatlessly.

John Mark broke in with an impatient exclamation. "But what about ~~Ben~~ Janus? I want to hear about Janus Aurelius!"

^{Ben Legion} ~~Ben~~ looked up at the boy. He said carelessly: "Perhaps the young Lord could be told, ^{Demas} ~~Ben~~ Legion."

One of the shadows detached itself from the wall and crawled quickly forward. Before the boy could draw away, he had clutched his cloak and was jerking it gently.

"Perhaps the lord of Rome is gone into the High Priest, young Lord. Perhaps Lord Janus is not well paid as a soldier and sells smuggled goods to the High Priest. Such as the fine linen of the fine cloak you are wearing now. Such a fine material as the fine cloak you have on would fetch a good price from the High Priest. Perhaps Lord Janus will procure even an unblemished lamb — like you, so the High Priest could wrap the unblemished lamb inside this fine linen cloak and ready him for the sacrifice, eh young Lord? Perhaps —

John Mark wrenched himself away. "Let go — you mad fool!"

Matthew stepped forward. "Look here —!" but he stopped when he saw ^{they weren't} ~~Ben~~ there. They had disappeared up the innumerable narrow openings which roped in ~~the old tax-gatherer~~ and out between the buildings.

Mary rubbed her temples with her fingers. The bruise of her fingers against the skin made sense to her. Nothing else did. Matthew cleared his throat, roughly, demanding something. John Mark shuffled his feet and said: "Well, then," and stopped.

Matthew

~~The old tax-gatherer~~ said: "Janus is gone to the High Priest's palace." He aimed

FISHED IN
HEROD'S
WINTER

the statements at John Mark.

The boy said: "No," stubbornly, as if he would turn the point away.

"No," he said again, his voice quicker, "one cannot believe what the Legions say. One knows they are liars. Janus is in the fortress."

Matthew raised his eyebrows and bit the end of his long mustache. ~~If they had seen him they would have known he had come to a conclusion.~~ ^{HE} He said: "Well, ^{YOU SAY} Janus is in the fortress, ^{WHAT NOW?"} and he halted and waited.

John Mark talked to himself under his breath. They had conspired to hurt him. It should all have mounted so quickly, so smoothly. He would have told them he was going into the fortress to see Janus and then persuaded Phillip, it should have been Phillip, not to wait here for him but to push on out of the city since to wait here would be dangerous for his mother, ^{AND} not to wait outside the walls either, but to push on to Bethany, ^{BETHANY WAS CLOSE AND SAFE. HE WOULD HAVE PROMISED} quite near and absolutely without danger to her, ^{TO BRING} to which he would have brought Janus after them with a light carriage of some sort, ~~he would have said,~~ but he would not have brought along Janus, ~~for~~ ^{that} he would have turned back into the city, sure now that his mother was safe ~~now~~ and all he would need to do ~~now~~ was to think of the Wall and the morning, and how to beat the sneering ^{ROMAN - JEW, SAUL} ~~few~~ of Tarsus. But all this had broken down, and now that ^{VERY ROLD TAX COLLECTOR} clever Matthew was waiting to trip him up. He hated them. ~~HE~~

He hated them all, the Legions who had talked too much, ^{< MATTHEW, WHO SPOKE TOO SIDEWAYS,} his mother who was standing there too quietly, ^{SOMETHING} Matthew. ^{INSIDE} ~~He~~ burst in him.

"Go on! ^{GET} out of the city! Take her to Bethany, I tell you! Take her to Bethany --- they are after her!" He was howling it at Matthew; flailing his hands and hopping from foot to foot. He heard his mother's gasp, ^{HEARD} then Matthew ^{SAID} quietly: "Nobody's going to Bethany." "John, are you out of your mind?" ^{HIS MOTHER SAID IN} ~~Matthew said~~ ^{ASTONISHMENT.}

It hadn't been her idea to come to Antomia. John Mark had rushed breathlessly into the house telling her the band was hoping she would go to see Janus and ask his help. That they had sent Matthew to guide her. She hadn't thought it useful or even worthwhile, knowing what was Janus' stand, but she had gone on what slim hope there was. Now, it was evident it had been John's idea alone.

"How will it help ~~us~~ ^{the MASTER} if we go to Bethany?" Matthew asked.

could see their faces now, blued and veined with age but utterly unfeeble around the mouths. The flesh at the mouths ^{was} ~~was~~ hard and wrinkled like ~~cooking~~ ^{covered by} heated wax put out to cool, ^{and with} a film of fine down and Rachel's had a large black mole at one corner which Mary thought marked her as the eldest of the formidable sisters and the main destroyer of ~~those~~ ^{THOSE} at whom the sisters ^{aimed} ~~were aiming~~ their hatchets.

The service was over and they were standing in the colonnade; the sisters, Stephen and she. And she had asked them who was the young man who had given the sermon. In the manner of the provinces, when there was no rabbi especially attached to the synagogue, a male worshipper ~~had~~ read from the Prophets and expounded the theme.

Rachel, at the question, put forth a snort that, by itself, spoke volumes. But the other sisters had fixed ^{RACHEL} ~~her~~ with their piercing black eyes and their beaklike mouths drawn tight, silently commanding her to go ahead and ^{bring up to date} ~~bring up to date~~ the two visitors. ~~Only Rachel's thin lips moved; the rest of her face was~~ ^{when she spoke} ~~immobility~~ ^{IMMOBILE, LIKE AN OLD ANIMAL'S} ~~immobile, like an old animal's~~

"That — carpenter! He says the most horrid lies about his betters! It makes one afraid to sleep lest he eggs ^{ON} ~~the~~ ruffians into murdering us in our beds! He calls us hypocrites, whitened ~~sepulchres~~ ^{ON} sepulchres full of dead bones, blind, robbers of widows and orphans, stiff-necked — anything which comes to his ~~dirty~~ tongue!"

Stephen had dutifully scowled across the colonnade at the personable young man ^{WHO} ~~with~~ ^{AT THAT MOMENT EMERGES. HE HAD} ~~the~~ forehead of a dreamer and ^{HE STOOD BY A PILLAR,} ~~the~~ resolute mouth, ^{who was at that moment leaning on one} ~~of the pillars~~ and talking to a group of soberly dressed men and women around them.

"I hope he ^{HAS THE WISDOM} ~~will be~~ wise enough to stay ^{AWAY FROM} ~~at~~ Jerusalem with that kind of talk," Stephen said ^{scowling} ~~angrily~~.

But Mary had looked with interest on the ^{stranger} ~~eldest~~ young man who had spoken ^{SO ELOQUENTLY} ~~the~~ words which exactly described The Family as she saw them.

"But he is going!" the sisters spat rapidly out in unison, their bony frames trembling in their eagerness to acquaint Stephen with the terrible news. Rachel said: "He is supposed to be a worker of miracles. You know how gullible the lower orders are. I daresay they support him well for the so-called miracles, but he is looking farther afield. No doubt he believes he will earn more in Jerusalem."

"But I thought you said he was a carpenter. Doesn't he work at his trade?"

it ourselves, we are good women," Rachel simpered. She looked up again, her beady eyes shiny. "We spoke to the men of the village and they went after him. They caught him and took him to the edge of a precipice to throw him down for his blasphemy — but he escaped." Her voice rose. "How he did, we do not know — as gentle bred persons we did not go, you understand, for I hear it can be horrible — but he escaped, for there he is!"

Mary looked across at the group, ^{LOOKED TO} ~~looked up at the fluted ceiling of the colonnade and nodded.~~

Later that year, he ^{CAME} ~~had come~~ to Jerusalem. Stephen had died quite suddenly and she was in mourning. She did not know how John, her son, had discovered the Nazarene. John collected friends like ~~orange~~ pebbles on a ~~shore~~ shore. All sizes and shapes and stripes. At John's persuasion, plus her own intriguing memories of the fine shock this unconventional ^{stranger} ~~young man~~ had given the detested Capernaum aunts, she had gone with him to hear the Nazarene preach outside the city. And then a strange thing happened.

She remembered she had been standing on the outskirts of the crowd. The Nazarene, as was his custom she afterwards learnt, had ~~passed~~ been passing up and down through the crowd after his sermon. Suddenly the people before her had parted and there he stood, looking at her. She could not recall having any emotions when their eyes met. It was as if everything, time, emotions, ^{her surroundings,} ~~the scene~~ ^{was} suspended.

"Is this your mother, John?" the Nazarene said. ^{"11/11"} ~~Mourning?~~

The ^{BOY} ~~child~~ beside her said something. She remembered now how she had looked at his hands running the tassels of his robes through his fingers and thinking what fine hands he had for a carpenter. Then the Nazarene had spoken directly at her.

^{must let} "You ~~must let~~ ^{must let} ~~the dead bury their dead,~~ ^{he said gently, strangely.}

There was nothing she could do now, and please be sensible, Mary. That was what

Janus had ~~said~~ said. Janus was right. A friend goes away and there is a sense of loss; as ^{one MISSED} missing a favourite chair from a corner, a piece of tapestry ^{from} ~~from~~ a wall, ^{from} but not this.

THIS WAS A

sense of flesh torn from your flesh and the pain rising to it and lingering there when it was gone. The remembered voice, ^{THE} the gestures recalled ^{THE} beat of precepts, hard to ^{ACCEPT} but coming at you straight, as a sword, ^{SO} ^{UNBENDING IN THE FACE} of your vanity or your modesty or position or for whom you ^{ACCEPTED} it ^{BECAUSE} you recognized the quality it was putting into you or you took it resentfully and licked the scars ^{OF HURT VANITY} when it had gone into you. ^{BUT HOWEVER IT WAS, YOU TOOK IT.} He had said if you took what he offered to you, it would make you free.

And he had not explained free of what or free for what; but guilt ^{the} ^{and the} apology for ^{HER} Janus had left her at ^{the} the words ^{and} she had hardly heeded the murmur ^{OF ANGER FROM HER PEOPLE} ^{(HAD BEGUN AT THAT TIME.} ^{AT THAT TIME.} Janus had said ^{THAT ON TOP OF EVERYTHING,} it was a mad thing to do, inviting that ^{DANGEROUS} ^{NAZARENE} ^{WEALTHY SADDUCEES AND} ^{SUPER PATRIOT} ^{PHARI} to her house and ^{LAUGHED AMUSEDLY} asking in those equally opinionated ^{IGNORANT HYPOCRITES} to hear him. He had ^{first rate} when he heard how they had nearly wrecked the place at ^{the Nazarene's} imputation that they were ^{WHAT THEY FANCIED TO BE} and not ^{of the oldest civilis} ^{ation on earth.} He will fall ^{IN} his own ^{YOKE,} Janus had said. ^{NAZARENE'S YOKE AS IF IT HAD BEEN MADE BY HIS OWN CARPENTER'S} ^{See} ^{BACK}

She had accepted the ^{poor} ^{her.} ^{So} she had remained serene through it all ^{and} ^{Janus} had ^{been} ^{UNABLE} to understand ^{HER} the serenity. ^{ONE A FEW THE OTHER A ROMAN SOLDIER,} Unable to understand that the paths which had led them both ^{to the same road} ^{and had entered it so they would} ^{OF} ^{WAS FATED} ^{AS LOVE.} had nothing to do with either ^{their wills,} but ^{WAS KNOWLEDGE THAT MADE YOU SO FREE,} It ^{you could mount on wings} ^{AS EAGLES.}

Then, if ^{are} ^{you running} ^{around} ^{inside,} ^{as poor} ^{JOHN MARK} ^{THE STREETS} ^{running} ^{tonight?} ^{En?} ^{perhaps you weren't as free as you thought.}

"Will you take ^{me to my cousin, Nicodemus?"} she ^{asked} suddenly.

Matthew had been very quiet. He halted ^{at her words.} ^{and she did see.} "I don't get the principle," he said.

She smiled a little at his Galilean talk. "There is no - principle, Matthew. I want to go to my cousin's. You know the way --- at any rate, I can show you."

He resumed his walk. He had been very quiet. He said: "Tell me, the cloak your son had on tonight. Is it his?" ^{Of course. There it was. That} ^{PREPOSTEROUS GARMENT.}

She had put it down to his boyish need for some kind of disguise in

the brigand-and-soldiers game he had been playing tonight.

She said quickly: "No, it was not. Why do you ask?"

But he was hurrying her now. He seemed anxious to get her to Nicodemus' house.

UWI Libraries

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UWI Libraries

Max Seneca looked around the room. His eyes were withdrawn and haughty. They skidded indifferently off the secretive Hebrew faces. The faces were tucked in around the mouths and around the bases of the noses and ~~he~~ climbed steep ^{as} up the cheek bones and went down again into shadowed, restless eyes. Max didn't like ^{Hebrew} ~~the~~ faces.

A few Greeks glittered their eyes on him, indifferent ~~as~~ ^{as} his. He should know they were citizens of Rome, like him, even if they were here for a Passover. He hated Greeks. They ^{ASSUMED} ~~was~~ too big. He would like to have a Greek to himself one day. He would.

"Is your friend ~~here~~ here?" he asked Guiseppe like an insult.

Guiseppe Zellini ~~he~~ squinted around the room through a thin smoke from the brazier they had brought in to warm it. Guiseppe had a sense of wellbeing. He was among Jews. At the fortress, he was Guiseppe the Butt, the Bore, the Crude, the Reach-me-down Gentleman. Among the Jews, he was Somebody. He grinned and rubbed a hand down his forearm. He nodded here and ~~nodded~~ ^{nodded} there.

Here and there, a few burnoused heads moved faintly. Guiseppe caught everyone of them and could have reeled off their names and ancestries just now, or anytime at all. He was very ^{MUCH} at home.

"JEW-LOVER"

~~Max pushed at him in an impatient way.~~ I asked if your friend was in here?"

A couple of temple guards were in the room as a warning to the people in the High Priest's palace to observe the rules ~~of~~ of decorum. ~~Some of them had been waiting for many hours. And now this matter of the arrest of a mad Nazarene would further delay their chances of gaining audience with the High Priest. It could be understood they could lose their decorum.~~

Guiseppe beamed and nodded across the room again. He also beckoned with his finger.

He also trumpeted happily: "'Skull'— come over here!"

One of the ~~the~~ temple guards marched across the room and saluted him. His face was skull-shaped, being very bony and white.

"'Skull', where can I find Cap'n ~~Malchus~~ Malchus?"

The guard

~~he~~ saluted again and turned on his heel. He was very smart. Max discovered he hated him and it made him happy. He looked at the pleased Guiseppe ^{as they fell in behind the Jewish guard.}

"By all the seven gods!" he swore. "You even know their nick-names!"

Guiseppe scowled. A while ago he hadn't felt hunted. Now looking at the wax-fruit

~~before him~~ he was being driven again. He itched to break things. He wanted to take that wax-fruit and press it to pulp. He could do it easy too with his big hands. He could take that face in his two hands and uproot that tongue which swore fashionable oaths by the - the - seven gods —

"March properly before this rabble, you clumsy fool!" Max snarled in a whisper.

Guiseppe jerked himself out of the shambling walk into which his thoughts had led him and fell into step behind Max, his head held proudly erect.

— SPACE —

Malchus ~~had~~ had just left the High Priest and was issuing several new orders to a hastily assembled patrol. They were to hurry, he told them. The quarry was no longer a ^{fat} sitting duck, but a sly little fox who knew every dodge, ^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ told them. Then he went in from the courtyard to his quarters where, he had been told, his friend Guiseppe awaited him.

"You know the Second, ^{Malchus?} ~~Malchus~~ Guiseppe said jovially. "Comes after the First."

^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ saluted Max Seneca respectfully. The Roman didn't move a muscle. ^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ hastily shifted his eyes back to ~~Malchus~~ Guiseppe.

"Well, what's the news?" Max Seneca barked. "Have they picked her up?"

^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ stubbornly locked his eyes with Guiseppe's. The flush on his face which Max Seneca's insult had brought on, was fading now, but his eyes were angry. Guiseppe cleared his throat unhappily. His eyes pleaded with ~~Malchus~~ a laugh on a bottom note.

^{Malchus.} "Speak freely to the Second, friend ~~Malchus~~ He knows about us ~~Malchus~~ here." ^{of his man, GUISEPPE.}

A fat hog belly-flopping in his wallow, Max thought ^{A fat hog,} home at last.

^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ turned abruptly to face Max Seneca. His shoulder screened Guiseppe, cutting him out of their company. ^{HIS EYES BURNED THEIR HATE ON THE OFFICER OF THE OCCUPYING POWER, THE HATED ALIEN.} The smile on the ~~Malchus~~ Roman creased out, slowly, unsure. ^{PATRONISING}

"We are no longer interested in the woman," ^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ said. "The cloak belongs to her son. We are trying to find the boy. ^{The High Priest had thought the INITIALS WERE MINE.}

Max Seneca's eyebrows lifted. "Where does this leave Janus Aurelius?" he demanded.

^{Malchus} ~~Malchus~~ shrugged. Max ^{LOOKED AROUND MAX CHAS FOR} ~~Malchus~~ Guiseppe. ~~Malchus~~ "Show yourself, you fat fool. What about Janus? Will this leave him in the clear?" ^{officer's}

Guiseppe shifted obediently from behind the Hebrew ~~Malchus~~/shoulder. "I didn't know about this," he said ^{TONELESSLY.} ~~ordinarily.~~

Max did not scream. ^{(BUT HE NEARLY DID. HE SAID TO MALCHUS: DID} "How ^{did} you know about the

Chapter 11

John Mark braked abruptly. He did it by throwing his shoulders back and digging his heels against the edges of the cobbles. He could do it fine. It sent a jar up through his body and burst it against his skull. The better you did it, the harder the burst. He looked back over his shoulder. He was clear of the Temple area now.

He had no more ideas for the night. Now that everything was alright with her, all he had to do was keep out of people's way. If he kept out of ~~the~~ people's way, he would not make such a fool of himself. Whenever he tried to do anything for grown-ups, he made a fool of himself. It was because they never seemed to think ahead as he did. They were peculiar.

He walked on, turning into streets at whim. He felt very free and untrammelled. He heard ~~was~~ a patrol of soldiers approaching long before they came in sight and would have ducked out instinctively. But he remembered in time that he had heard they weren't after his family at all. He stuck his thumbs into the band at his waist and swaggered a little as they came nearer. He whistled thinly under his breath at a tune he didn't recognize, he was so wary. But they passed and didn't look at him. He whistled louder when they were ~~past~~ past. He thought pityingly ^{on} Saul. ^{HERE HE WAS, JOHN MARKS,} ~~He was~~ out here, risking footpads and ignoring Roman patrols, while Saul cowered in his bed, doubtless with the covers drawn over his head. He suspected that Saul was a coward.

The soldiers disappeared around a corner and he was alone on the street again. He felt as dangerous as a Bedouin bandit. ~~About his waist,~~ ^{about} he almost felt the pull of the sash ~~at~~ his waist weighted with the gleaming blades. He almost felt the brush of the tribal burnouse at the back of his neck. ^{He was a marauding Bedouin,} A sliver of a yell escaped from his throat before he could control it. He looked around quickly, ~~he~~ alarmed at the quantity of dangerous things inside him. He must be careful. He stoned a cat until it went over a wall.

^{Then he remembered ~~the~~ what he would have to do in the morning and he tried waiting the P.T.O.} He went on again, his head carefully empty for a time. Then the night and the silence got into him again. Sometimes he was the great lion-hunter, stalking ^{around} ~~around~~ the cold rocks. Then, unaccountably, he slipped into the part of the hunted, coughing and grimacing like the great cats. It was very intense and he had to stop to breathe.

A puff of wind came out of a side street and lifted the hairs ~~on his neck~~ at

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the ^{NAPE} back of his ^{NECK, THE NIGHT} ~~head~~ smelled of rain. He looked up past the flat roofs of the houses and saw there was a bit of overcast. He stopped and searched the sky keenly, hopeful and fearing ^{ful} at once, that more clouds would gather and ^{would BREAK} ~~break~~ in a rainstorm over the city. It would be wonderful to arrive at the Wall, later, soaked to the skin and just let drop the information, barely in the hearing of Saul, that he had walked the streets all night through the same driving rainstorm which had made Saul and his Committee duck their heads under the sheets. What their staring eyes would say! What their gaping mouths would declare! He ~~would~~ bet Saul would be moved. He ~~would~~ ^{even} bet/Saul would be moved by that.

Or by this.

Another patrol was coming down the street. One in Straight Street, one in Sinai Street, another in Tiberius Way, one by the public baths, this was the fifth. He would tell them off on his fingers to Saul, ^{looking into his eyes, that} ~~barely within his hearing~~ he had met with five patrols during the night.

patrol

— (1) SPACE —

They ^{SPACE} had been searching for hours without success. They had forced their way into several likely looking houses, putting their questions with fists and elbows and knees but the owner of the cloak had eluded them. The section of the city with which they had been charged, had been worked through. Now they were on their way back to barrack to report failure to Quartus. Each of the four fervently hoped that another of the patrols would bring better news. None of them had forgotten how Quartus had joked of the galleys.

They swung alongside the Hebrew boy and the ~~leading~~ patrol corporal who led them reached for him.

"Halt, men," he growled. "Let's have a look at this brave ^{young} /Isaac who ^{doesn't} ~~shouldn't~~ take off for the woods when he sees us coming."

As he talked, he was roughly turning the boy to him, waiting for ~~the~~ one of the men to uncover the lantern.

John Mark made his face stony. He wanted the light to find him that way when it flashed on his face. He blinked once when it came on, then stared steadily at the beam.

"Well — I'll be hung up!" exclaimed the corporal. "Boy — what are you doing

have gone for Saul.

~~"What you mean she never goes into anything?" the short one said like angry. "You mean to say the first is no report what you think like first time when they back you off to bed? Talk about flowers? By the gods — I thought you were a clever young Isaac! Here, let me test your muscles — mean to say a lad with the muscles never spotted his case? Tell you what, you tell your mother about it and —"~~

"Alright — knock it off!" rapped the corporal giving his head a half turn.

"Now, come on you," he said to John Mark. "What's going on out here?"

He was hating again. He had hated all ^{ADULTS} ~~big people~~ awhile ago back in the alley. And he hadn't felt good and sure of himself again until he had ^{BROKEN AWAY} ~~broken away~~ from them and was alone. Then everything had gone straight and sweet as he liked it. He had ^{OCCUPIED} ~~had~~ his own thoughts and used streets at whim.

"Hey!" the short one whispered strongly. "You ask your mother about ^{THINGS, EH?} ~~the sudden move~~?"

"I said to stop shovelling the dirt, soldier!" the corporal said again. The short one knew ^{THAT} ~~he meant it~~ this time. ^{THE CORPORAL MEANT IT.} He went back to the edge of the ring and whistled softly through his teeth. ["What are you doing on the streets alone, at this hour?" the ^{CORPORAL} ~~corporal~~ said.

^{JOHN MARK} ~~He~~ did not like to lie. He had told ~~lies~~ before, ~~and he was a liar~~. He could count the times for he remembered them. They made him sick inside, as if himself ^{INSIDE} wanted to come out of himself and look back at himself. He had to fight himself at those times, for it would make him sicker to look back at himself. He thought it ^{OUT} ~~slowly~~, counting the cost. But he had to be free of them. ^{SOLDIERS.} It could never be sweet again if he was not free of them. The smell of leather and wine ^{STALE} ~~about them~~ ^{WAS} ~~too much~~. He had liked the smell of Peter and the others. They smelled of ^{SALT} ~~wind~~ and ~~the~~ sea.

"I ~~was~~ ^{said sullenly}, "was going for my uncle. My mother is not well."

"Where are the servants? Why didn't she send one of them?" ~~for your uncle?~~

"Stupid Roman!" ~~and he was a Roman~~ ^{Passover?}

He received a clout for that. He wrenched his arms wildly, and stopped. He knew it was due him. He always became angrier as he increased his untruths.

"You should be taught early not to be rude to a Roman," the corporal said. "Now, ^{GET OFF WITH YOU.} ~~run away~~ And remember ~~to be civil~~ to be civil if you run into another patrol."

Their holds were loosening, but he wrenched himself free ^{IN} ~~defiance~~ defiance. He hopped

"Heh heh," someone laughed softly somewhere near him. "You ^{lie} like a true legion."

John Mark stood very still. He was being afraid. He knew it by the ~~little~~ little pain in the region of his belly. Suddenly a hand was ~~placed~~ ^{pressed} over his mouth and other arms pulled him into a recess, ~~he hadn't known was there~~. The alley was deathly still. He did not struggle. Something warned him that he should not struggle. A hand turned his head so he faced the alley. gently ~~back into the alley~~. Something which was only a deeper shadow went past the opening. A moment later, another passed. Nothing else moved. The hand was removed from his mouth and he worked ~~blood~~ ^{blood} ~~into~~ ^{into} his lips and spat.

"How - how —?"

"But I thought —"

He had heard words something like these before. It had been the commencement

of the breaking up of things. He knew it now. These were words which frightened him and hurt. ~~and he knew that he was not alone in the world and that he was not alone in the world and that he was not alone in the world~~ And not just words. These were the ^{MATTERS} ~~things~~ he had not wanted to remember since he ~~had~~ ^{CUT OF} stumbled ~~down~~ Gethsamane.

"Devil Annas has decreed that since you're too young to crucify, the spies should find you and stage an — accident. They've been to your house already."

It went into him clean and fast like nothing at all. ~~And~~ ^{And} only when he breathed did he know the pain was there. His lips were stiff and the words had to force themselves out. ^{Ben} Legion answered the two words.

"Your mother, ^{YOUR MOTHER} ~~is~~ ^{SHE HAS NOT} gone back to your house. She is at your ^{UNCLE} ~~Nico-~~ ^{NICODEMUS IS} demus, ~~the~~ the night blooming camomile whom Annas wants to pluck."

Well, alright. She was alright. He would go to her at Cousin Demmy's. So these Legion even knew ^{ALL ABOUT} how he had got ~~the~~ ^{DEMMY} Cousin to visit the Nazarene that night? Well, alright. Old Annas had found out too. Well he was alright. ^{FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO} And now that he knew the spies were after him, he would show them. He was not afraid, even if he was ~~swallowing~~ ^{swallowing}. His knees were ^{SHAKING} ~~trembling~~ But even when he ran the foot-races at ~~the~~ school, which he had won every year except once when he was second because Saul had put up a boy to jostle him on the bend, his knees ^{SHOOK} ~~were~~ just before the start.

"You are brave, boy?"

It was funny that just two hours ago he had thought ^{BEN LEGION AND HIS COMPANIONS} ~~them~~ fools and half-witted; ^{but} ~~now~~ now they were taking him in charge. Although the others hadn't said anything, he knew ^{OF THEM} ~~they~~ all had him in charge. It was ^{MUCH} ~~as~~ as when he was younger and in a crowd with his mother, ^S ~~she~~ never had to say anything but you felt she had you in charge, ^S ~~something~~ coming out of her and building itself around you so that no harm could come to you.

It wouldn't be like this on the Wall, in the morning. The sun would be up and you would see what you were fighting and how to duck and run and turn back in ~~your~~ tracks and go again, swift ^{ly}, and you would not be sweating so much as those down there ^{ON THE GROUND} would be sweating for you. Tonight you saw shadows; and ^{ORDINARY STREET -} ~~corners~~ yielded up fingers for your throat. ^{ankles,}

"We are taking you to the only place Annas and his spies will not look for you. ^{PETER} Simon and the ~~other~~ one called John Boanerges are there. They will look after you."

OF GRIEF

Nicodemus could understand hard grief; the kind which found its own clay and fire-hardened it and walled up the doors and windows and stayed inside. He would have understood, if not have welcomed, the ~~other~~ kind which took no shape but turned like water, willingly, into whatever friendly hands there were to cup it. But while he expected and knew there must be grief in Mary Mark over the arrest of Jesus, all the evidence was suggesting that ~~her~~ grief ^{SHE WAS NOT OF COURSE, EXULTING, BUT SHE WAS EXHILERATED.} this ~~grief~~ was being like wine to her. [^] It made him queerly worried.

"I don't know what was your hope in him, Mary. Mine was whatever is created in a curious mind. I haven't, perhaps I cannot, place it. Perhaps he merely intrigued me. Whatever it was, I - I admired his courage in putting forward a quite new theory in a society dangerously opposed to new theories. He should be a Greek; you know how absolutely devoted they are to new theories. I am - sorry for him, my dear."

Her smile was as alive and vivid as ever. "Don't look so worried, Demmy, please. And, do, stop explaining yourself. I haven't come to ask you to get in trouble with old Annas again. As to what hope I had in him? None, I guess. I did not believe, as my Johnny did, that he would be coming to Jerusalem with an army at his back. His hands weren't built for swords. They were made to heal the sick; to comfort the ^{unhappy,} distressed. ^{to set prisoners free."}

He looked thoughtfully down at the floor. He said slowly: "To tell the truth, that was why I went with ^{YOUR SONS} Johnny, that night to see him. I had heard of these miraculous healings he has been performing all ^{OVER THE} about the country. And when this theory of his came to my hearing —" he looked up at her "— the one about everlasting life, it made me curious to see whether the fellow had discovered some method of at least prolonging life. I must confess he disappointed me."

She laughed with what seemed to be real amusement. "Why, Demmy! That sounds as if you had hoped to bottle some of whatever he had and get in early on the trade! You ^{ARE} a lawyer by profession but a tradesman at heart! How Janus would love to hear this! He says we are a nation of tradespeople — even to our priests who ~~change~~ change ~~the~~ moneys for pilgrims into Temple currency and sell lambs for the sacrifice in the courts."

He looked a trifle annoyed. "Here, let me take your cloak now. Sit down, Mary, you must be tired."

"No - yes, Demmy, thanks. But I am not tired, not really."

She smiled; not brightly, ~~but~~ ^{AN} with effort, but ~~but~~ ^{to say} with thanks and that she liked him ~~he~~. He took the cloak ~~from~~ from her shoulders and folded the folds in symmetry and went across the room and draped it over the stand. He returned, his face expressionless. He stopped before her, his hands clasped together at his back. She had always thought his head distinguished. Like the heads on those busts of Roman senators — carved for them by the Greek artists and looking outrageously like Grecian heads.

"My solemn Demmy," she said, smiling up at him, "you look, standing there, like the soul of rectitude. I know you are dying to ask me where am I coming from and with whom did I come and why have I come."

It did not confuse him. He was never confused by her. Mary suspected that he knew her more than she knew herself. Sometimes she thought that this was probably why she had never been in love with him. The man whom she loved must leave her secrets lying deep and undisturbed. Then in her own time and way, she would portion them out to him, and watch him discover ~~her~~ her. Love ~~would~~ withers and dies in the cold, pure ~~air~~ air of great knowledge.

"Yes," he said, smiling gently. "From where, why and with whom?"

She told him.

"Yet you did not come to me at first?" he chided her gently. "I am your only kinsman in Jerusalem, Mary."

Her eyes went past his head. "I did not think it a moment to seek - kinsmen, Demmy. I thought it a moment to seek powerful friends."

"I also have some power," he reminded her.

"Only the High Priests among our people possess the power to do what I want done."

"You mean, to release — him?"

"So," she agreed ~~in~~ in sudden brusqueness. "Would he ~~have~~?"

[IT IS EXPEDIENT THAT ONE MAN DIES INSTEAD OF A NATION. THE REASONING OF MEN WHO ARE CALLED TO BE HIGH PRIESTS. (MORE)]

["No, I don't think so."]]

"So, you see."

"Do you, too? — SEE?"

"I know. I failed there too. *Neither would Janus HAVE RELEASED HIM.*"

"Janus

~~is~~ ^{is} Rome, Mary. Rome. Do you understand what that means?"

"I am in love with him, my cousin. Do you understand? You get the principle — as Matthew would say?"

The room was big and masculine, ^{OF} ~~with~~ ^{SKIN-COVERED} wide ^{ROOM} couches and dull-polished tables, suggesting a large handedness she found restful. Stephen's ^{ROOM} had never been like this, ~~as~~ The scrubbed floor was always too well scrubbed, and the shiny bits had gleamed to the point where they repelled you. After Stephen had come Nicodemus, and she would no ^{may} have thought she was ~~doubt~~ ⁱⁿ love with him had she not met Janus. Where Stephen had been self-indulgent and mean, ^a Demmy was ^a thoughtful, ~~and~~ honest man. She could fit none of these neat labels to Janus.

"Annas gave orders for ^{the} ~~him~~ whipping a hour or two ago."

She covered her face with her hands. "But it is dreadful, Demmy," she whispered.

"It is done to nearly all prisoners of the Temple. It seems dreadful to you because you perhaps never heard of it. I have ordered it to be done before."

Most of the time, she ~~thought~~ thought of men as children, noisy, often grubby, sometimes trying, children. And when the iron in them showed, for any purpose, it shook her a little to remember they weren't children. She pulled her hands from her face and stared at him.

"What are you going to do to him?" she questioned harshly. "Let me hear it from you. ^{the Roman,} I have heard it from Janus, but I want to hear it from you, a fellow Hebrew and one of the Sanhedrin. Are you going to murder him for the truth?"

His face lost its immobility and descended into decidedly stern lines. He has ascended the bench, she said to herself cruelly. He will pass judgment now.

"Men aren't murdered for the truth, Mary," he said gently. "They die so ^{their} ~~their~~ beliefs may ^{DIE WITH THEM OR} grow out of them. ^{IT IS THE ULTIMATE TEST OF TRUTH.} A seed must be put into the ground before a tree will grow out of it."

"And you are one of the willing farmers," she said, but not really bitter.

"If his beliefs are contrary to the law which I have sworn to uphold and if I am called in to give judgment, I shall judge according to the law, Mary."

"Spoken like a man, Demmy." Her mood had returned and now she teased him. "Janus on one side and you on the other, it is a triumph for law and order all the way. Tell me, if I had been brought before the judgment seat, would you judge according to the law?"

She had hurt him.

"Don't break the rules, Mary. I am playing fair."

"Do you think Janus would? I mean, ^{judge} according to the law."

Hold on, Demmy. ^{RIGHT HERE,} I am not sure if I joke. ~~He took a turn about the room.~~

He took a turn about the room. He ^{RETURNED} ~~straightened things out and there and there~~ to her.

"I understand Annas. Good or bad, the things he is upholding are the things settled by thousands of years of trial before his time. From Abram down to us. We are prone to think we know more than the ancients. Some laugh at their precepts as oldfashioned. We are the great Just Nows. The know-it-all moderns. ^{Were there} ~~not men like Annas — permanent, immovable —~~ Mary, the world would go to pieces. You will therefore understand the pain it is to him to know that I, a ruler among the people, had gone to hear this new doctrine. Whether I believed or not was beside the point. I had gone."

And whether he believed, nobody was sure, not even himself. It had seemed at first something of the mumbo jumbo claptrap which sprang up faster than thorns all a society as religious through ~~such an intensely religious society~~ as the Hebrews. To receive what I have to offer, you must be born again. And he had come out of the cave where the band stayed at nights for safety over at Olives, and to which the excited ^{YOUNG} John^Y had led him, unsure whether to laugh or be angry. Unsure of anything.

That had been the strength of the man. He made you unsure of anything.

"But did you believe, Demmy?"

He shook his head like a man ^{irritable} because he was unsure. "That is not the point, I tell you." That answer did not seem ^{TO HIM} like the right one, ~~He~~ He threw himself down on a couch. ~~He gave a long look and he held himself. I must have had some~~ ~~congress. The whole world was holding its breath and there~~

She waited to see if he was joking. He was not smiling.

"I do not wait to believe what I say. I say it first, then believe."

"Demmy," she said slowly, groping, "you are ~~demmy~~ — you are dishonest."

"So is everyone who thinks," he said coldly. He rose. "So is he. He sets you the impossible and say, 'Here is my standard. Do this, and everything is yours. *LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.*'"

In another man, there would ^{HAVE BEEN} ~~be~~ passion ~~there~~ to match the pain in him; for
 I am aware that I have hurt him, as he was hurt by the Nazarene.

"A teacher's task is to set standards, Demmy. Ours, to reach for them."

He turned about to ^{one} ~~the~~ wall, turned quickly, guiltily back to face her, mindful of his manners.

"I am not satisfied that is right. I am not satisfied with being told ~~to~~ ~~that~~ ~~my~~ ~~grasp~~ ~~of~~ ~~god~~ ~~depends~~ ~~on~~ ~~nothing~~ ~~more~~ ~~tangible~~ ~~than~~ ~~an~~ ~~abstract~~ ~~of~~ ~~water~~ ~~and~~ ~~spir~~ ~~its~~ ~~the~~ ~~moon~~ ~~on~~ ~~a~~ ~~level~~ ~~of~~ ~~god~~ ~~can~~ ~~any~~ ~~be~~ ~~can~~ He must do better than that, if he HAS AMBITIONS

~~is~~ ~~additions~~ to take the place of Moses. Moses wrote his commandments in stone and told us
and when to make love. DO YOU REMEMBER THAT A STRONG

when to wash our hands. He was a leader who led. ~~MAN SUCH AS RUNAS PREFERS THE GOD OF MOSES?~~

"But you have cut off his ambitions. Suddenly," she murmured.

He shrugged. "That is a hazard of the game. I hear he had a cousin, one John, with similar ambitions. Seems it runs in the family. Herod cut off his head and gave it to his harlot ^{The Nazarene} ~~where~~ on a silver platter after she had charmed him in a dance. ~~Jesus~~ should have been warn

"Demmy, you are cruel -- and ~~send me!~~"

"As I must be to live in this jungle! ~~For I must keep my~~ head to keep my head — or it will go to the priests for a keepsake! As you should do, were you not so reckless! You risk your neck as you do your reputation! You not only choose to allow them your house for their so-called Passover tonight — although you are aware the Temple believes they plot with the Zealots to start a rebellion in the city — but you wander through the streets with this Matthew and then come here alone! Is there no sense in that pretty head of yours? Don't you know what they say about you already? You — and Janus? Whatever —!"

But she never knew whatever. She had never seen him so worked up. He used to hold his emotions on leash. Now as ~~he moved towards it~~ ^{the knock came at the door and he moved towards it,} ~~he was~~ ^{he was} ~~frantic~~ ^{frantic} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the knocking raised~~

HIS HEAD WAS BOWED. HIS SHOULDERS LOOKED HOLLOW.
~~late~~ ^{was hurriedly} ~~he~~ ^{he} walked unweary. He spoke in a low voice to whoever was at the door. Then, he ~~came~~ back.

He came back with the bridge of his nose perspiring and a ring of white around his eyeballs. He ~~stretched his hands~~ ^{reached down and gripped her} shoulders and lifted her to her feet. He whispered hoarsely to her: "Where is John? Where is ~~he~~ ^{your son?} Where is he?"

It was peculiar how terror leaped in her too, as if it had been there all the time and only waiting for a touch.

"I - dont - know!" she stammered.

He swallowed. The fingers eased on her shoulders. He said quieter: ~~XXXX~~ "You must stay here. I will go to David Street for him. You mustn't worry."

"But he is not at David Street!. I dont know where he is! Tell me what is wrong!"

The ring around his eyes widened ~~XXXX~~ some more.

"Not at — Good God!"

Strength flowed into them simultaneously.

"Mary," he said quietly, "one of my own men who has been at Annas' has just brought me a report. Annas' spies have been given orders to - to get hold of John. They have discovered that he was in the Garden with the Nazarene. They have his cloak."

She learnt all about it at that moment; the queer words of the mad folk called the Legions; Matthew's questions concerning the cloak. She told Nicodemus. He was busy before she was through. He was out of the room and quickly back, dressed for the street.

"You must wait here, Mary. My men and I will find him before they can get to him."

She could see him now. He was a lonely little boy, ^{tall for his age, taller than she, but still a boy} walking ~~through~~ ^{IN} the dark, ashamed, unaware of his danger. Her lips were dry, ~~and~~ ^{she} moistened them with the tip of her tongue

"You must, Demmy," she whispered. "You must, O, you must!"

ZEALOUS

The Nazarene

The word was spread, with ~~an~~ furtiveness, that Jesus would be taken to Caiaphas' palace. Sometimes those who spread it, gave the route too: by way of Simeon's Tomb, they said. But it was given to you like ^{out of} a pot of gold, doled out jealously. You would not get it if you were not a good one. You had to be elected by their eyes.

Those who spread the word, looked you up and ^{DOWN AND} sideways, ~~out of their eyes~~, their eyes licking gently and carefully along your face to see if you were a good one. And then, after that, they dropped their heads and spoke it to you from under their armpits. It made you feel fine, the way they gave it to you, as if only you would be told.

And if you took it ~~like~~ as if it was no concern of yours and went back to stroking your beard or back to whatever you had been doing, they went away from you. But if you took it with it your eyes going hot and sounds making in your throat, then it was known that something had gone home and, thereafter, the mark was on you. YOU WERE, IN FACT ~~OF THE~~ JURY.

The Rodent was smart. He ^{TOLD} ~~said~~ to Annas that he ^{was} ~~was~~ sure if the word was carefully spread, the Nazarene's friends would try a rescue. But the temple guard would be waiting for them and they would all be wiped out. The idea appealed to Annas.

Simon Peter and John ~~Boanerges~~ had the mark put on them because John, when the voice spoke at his ear, could not hold back the groan ^{THAT FILLED} ~~filled~~ his mouth. ~~and~~ Peter ~~and~~ touched his shoulder to quiet him.

The brazier sputtered in the room and there were sneezes and coughs. A few old ^{make} ~~men~~ pilgrims spoke the psalms of the Hallel over and over as if they spun cocoons for their isolation. The guards around the antechamber rested their backs against the walls and had no emotion at the spies slipping ~~around~~ about the big room, dropping their poisoned bait of information. The two Roman officers crashed across the room and the guards winked at Guiseppe and ^{NOTED} ~~and~~ the concern on his face. They ignored Max Seneca.

Simon Peter and John ~~Boanerges~~ left soon after the officers.

— SPACE —

They told him to take off his sandals because the best sandals would slap just when you didn't want it to and he could see how silently they travelled for they never wore sandals. He would have protested, but one of the Legions simply ^{GRABBED} ~~grabbed~~ him.

The hand was still clamped on the back of his neck, ~~then they~~ ~~pass~~. Angrily, he endeavoured to knock the grip away but it only became firmer and shook him ~~a little~~, like a puppy. It told him he was not yet good enough to be on his own and he should be guided by the pack. John Mark muttered vexedly to himself and he was shaken again to be quiet. They all ~~waited~~ ^{WAITED} while Ben Legion went up ahead, for here, they must cross a wide street. The streets were becoming wider as they neared the palace and there were much stoppings while Ben ~~Legion~~ went ahead to see that all was clear.

Since there was no shaking the grip, he sullenly gave himself up to it. He told himself it was their affair if they were caught. They would be properly sorry when they saw him caught by the spies. Who were they not to accept him when they could see he knew ~~what it was all about?~~ ^{HOW TO GO ABOUT IT?} Wasn't he crossing these wider cobbles, an inch at a time, face down to the dirty stones, doing it with fingers and toes and body ~~arched~~ ^{ARCED} upward, so his clothes wouldn't swish over the cobbles? And even though ~~ALL~~ ^{ALL} his muscles ~~were~~ ^{CRIED TO MAKE} a quick run of it, instead of this slinking, inch by inch, wasn't he doing it? ~~What was he doing?~~ ^{LOUSY HAND} O, this ~~hand~~ ^{LOUSY HAND} at his neck!

Very well. They could go on doing all the thinking for him. More trouble to them. He was very glad he had no thinking to do. His thinking was at an end. ~~But~~ Peter and Matthew and James and the rest of them would have to do some powerful thinking if they hoped to stay ahead of the priests. As for the plan the Legions had for him, he would see to that. Putting him with the ignorant Peter and the crazy John indeed! When, at this very moment, the soldiers may be hunting them!

Which made him think of the soldiers. It was funny he had not seen any soldiers lately. Only a few ~~spies~~ ^{would have been} spies. And it was making him angry again. It ~~was~~ ^{was} nice in a shuddery sort of way to know that soldiers of Rome had been hunting you. He knew they had not been hunting him for they had caught him and then let him go. He wished they had not let him go but had marched him to Antonia with their ~~studded~~ ^{studded} sandals crashing ^{forth} back and front of him and their javelins clicking in the rests at their belts. Perhaps, someone would have seen him. Then, tomorrow, when the sneering Saul looked up at the Wall and saw he was not there, and turned to his cronies to ~~look~~ ^{THEIR} ~~their~~ howl ~~at~~ ^{laughter} at his cowardice, someone standing near would say, O, ~~he~~ ^{JOHN MARK COULDN'T} ~~wasn't~~ ^{DIDN'T YOU HEAR} he is in Antonia ~~now~~ ^{arrested by the Roman SOLDIERS?}

FOR THE ENTRANCE.

he leapt ~~for the entrance.~~

He dodged a clutching hand, ^{BY} throwing himself feet forward into a beautifully controlled skid which took him under it, twisted away from another, ~~at~~ a precise timing ~~which broke~~ ^{WHIPPY} his cloak past the fingers and ~~broke into~~ ^{ALMOST MADE} the street as ~~Ben~~ ^{BUT BEN} catapulted from the ~~the~~ ^{THE} crouch into which he had fallen to watch the oncoming squad, ~~and~~ ^{BEN} got him about the waist. ~~Down they went, with Ben rolling sideways.~~

~~so as not to crush him.~~

PULLING JOHN MARK ALONG.

Ben was up in a moment and scurrying back into the court, ~~taking the boy with him.~~ ^{LIKE A SACK, HE} flung him to the others, ~~like a sack.~~ But they had been seen.

"Ho, there!" one of the policemen cried.

"Ho, there!" shouted another, ~~in a very big base.~~ ^{HO, THERE!" WHISPERED BEN.}

Then John Mark heard the clatter of ^{FEET} ~~their sandals~~ on the concourse, approaching the court, ~~knowing deliberately being sure that the quarry was bottled up in there, and John Mark~~ ^{"COME OUT AND BE IDENTIFIED!" "COME OUT AND BE IDENTIFIED!" WHISPERED BEN.} ~~had a vision of~~ ^{[JOHN MARK COULD ALMOST SEE THE} knocked knees and bow legs under the skirt of the short tunics, ~~with~~ ^{elbows back and the short thrusting} swords held at the ready, the skin of their faces taut and shiny with cruelty. ~~and~~ ^{FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE WAS} really scared, ~~for the first time, he~~

He saw the squad enter the court. ^{AND HE SAW THEM DIE.}

He also ~~saw them~~ ^{and} He heard the Legions laugh. They laughed softly ~~as~~ from the ground, like apparitions, they worked the blades they had snatched out of their clothing. They struck upward, from the ground, and their soft laughter sounded peculiar underneath ^a babbling shrieks which each man made as he received the blade. The Legions allowed them to live while they stood, holding their undersides and shrieking, ^{THEN THEY} ~~they then~~ finished them off when their knees gave way and they slid to the ground. ^{JOHN MARK FAINTED.}

CHAPTER 14

The new matter took hold of them in a way that was good. They poked it and prodded it and found it was ^{difficult} hard, but they believed that by a quick, hard slash they could cut through it. James had already reported failure with the Zealots.

"We will get no help from the Zealots," James ^{told them} ~~said~~ swiftly. "They are out of it. They say they mounted the wrong horse when they sounded off for ^{The Nazarene} Jesus. They are going back to Barabbas. So we will have to do it ourselves and I for one say, glory be to God our guts will be showing soon."

"Amen," his brother, John said, biting it off, his lips stiff with passion.

Thomas looked around, his brow creased into ladders of hilarity. "One fanfare, please, men, then all say after me: 'Hail to the brothers of the glorious guts!'"

~~But then~~ Peter said rudely, "Go away. Who knows this Simeon's Tomb well?"

"I know the route blindfolded," John ^{said} ~~replied~~. "All we need is one quick rush and we can get him away from them. That's all we need. One quick rush —"

"Into eternity," Matthew said, "unless we plan well."

~~HE GLARED AT MATTHEW.~~

John leaped up ~~there~~, his face working. "Who let him in?" he cried pitched thin and off key. "Who let in a turncoat tax collector to ~~stand~~ ^{BE A POX ON ME?} Take him OFF MY BACK!"

~~FLUNG~~

His brother ~~flung~~ an arm ~~around~~ around his shoulder, ~~and he leaped swiftly to~~ Matthew ~~turned~~ turned to Simon Peter.

"Simon," he said angrily, "rule against this fool. Or rule for him, but rule."

"Nobody ~~rules~~ rules for me!" John shouted.

"And who rules here anyway?" ^{THOMAS SNAPPED.} "Who says ~~he~~ ^{SIMON HAS A RIGHT TO} rule?"

"Rule, Simon Peter!" Matthew stormed to his feet. "Rule, or by God —!"

James whipped his jaw around in a snarl at Matthew. "We say there'll be no rule, tax collector!"

Peter slapped his hands to the wall at his back and heaved to his feet. He was taller than ^{AVERAGE} ~~any of them~~ and broad in the ^{CHEST} ~~shoulders~~ to suit. He was ready for violence.

^{It} was written all ^{OVER} ~~over~~ on him. ^{JOHN AND JAMES} The brothers ~~shouldered~~ shouldered together. ~~They~~

They felt that together they could break him and they were willing ^{to try.}

"Thou art Peter," old Phillip said distinctly.

A PECULIAR FAMILIARITY ABOUT THE
WORDS WORRIED THEM.
SIT DOWN, SIMON. MATTHEW IS RIGHT.

Old Phillip, who had sat unmoved, said from the ground again: "Thou art Peter. Does NOBODY remember?"

Thomas bowed his face into his hands. Phillip did not look at them. He looked into the light from the lantern and his face was old and peaked in the light. His lips moved.

"Thou art Peter, ^{the Rock.} ~~and the word means, A Rock.~~ And upon this Rock I will build ~~...~~
So it that we can forget so soon?

He rose ~~slowly~~ ^{As} he ended, stepped to the entrance of the court and stood there STAGGERED AFTER OLD PHILLIP, UP, with his back to them. Their minds ~~slowed~~ ^{frantic} on the road to understanding. ~~and~~ ^{HARSH-LIVING MEN WHO JOURNEYED OVER DESERT AND SEA, GREETED} ~~turned back into the void of uncertainty.~~ ^{WITH CURSES, SENT AWAY WITH STONES, BUT FED IN THE WILDERNESS. SHAMEFACEDLY THEY} Thomas took his hands from his face. He looked up at John Boanerges and his eyes

burned painfully in his head. REMEMBERED HOW THEY HAD BEEN FED IN THE WILDERNESS, WITH FOOD AND WITH COURAGE THEY

"We could use that 'Amen' now, Johnny," he whispered hoarsely. "Say it again, Johnny Thunder."

They turned their heads away from each other, nobody SOUGHT his neighbour's face. Then John sat down and afterwards his brother sat too. Simon Peter moved away from the wall. "Get up, Johnny," he ~~said~~ commanded. "You know the way. You will guide us to this Simeon's Tomb."

It was a strong walk from David Street to Simeon's Tomb. Much of it lay through streets bounding the Temple area and they made it longer by choosing a route which would take them ^{AROUND} ~~about~~ the area. They ^{WENT IN SINGLE FILE,} ~~went~~ keeping close to the sides of the street, halting at the slightest sound, their heads twitching nervously.

They were not afraid. But it was a long walk and there was time for thinking; and the matter that had taken so good a hold of them, was not so good again. It was remembered in each head that there was but a single sword among them, ~~although they all carried their~~ ^{AS} ~~swords~~ ^{PARTY,} ~~as~~ an assault ~~party~~. Thomas thought they weren't worth spit.

A loose awning over a sweetmeat stall somewhere up the street flapped loudly and they froze to the wall. It flapped again and they got it. Each man let go his breath very quietly and carefully and old Phillip saw the humour and chuckled.

"Simon," he said, "if your Cox ever saw us tonight, we would never live it down."

Matthew said: "We should keep our eyes open for the boy. We may reach him before the Temple does."

"O, plug your whistle!" John Boanerges snapped irritably. "Hasn't his mother the whole garrison at Antonia to draw on if she wants to find him?"

Peter had been peering around the angle of the doorway into which they had drawn for cover. He drew in his head.

"Don't malign the woman," he said. "She did us a good turn tonight."

"Uh huh, but she got what she wanted," James returned. "Notoriety."

"She took us in," Phillip said stoutly.

"Yes. She took the cave-dwellers into her fine house and gave us a fine room to eat the fine supper which our Judas had prepared for us," John jeered.

not
"That the scriptures might be fulfilled," Thomas murmured. "We ate and were un-merry. Yet, tomorrow we die."

to
"Listen, our jovial Job," James grunted. "Ready for your applause?"

This must be how it is to be young, Phillip thought. Weep one minute, laugh the next. Block the channels of memory with anything, no matter how unseemly. He drew a breath deep and his chest ached. Suddenly he had no pity. ^{PHILLIP} ^{THESE YOUNG MEN} needed to be hit.

OUR LORD, JESUS,
"I wonder how ^{he} knew she would take us in?" he ~~asked~~ ^{ASKED INNOCENTLY.}

"He knows people," Thomas said.

~~They were ready to go on again. Phillip dragged himself reluctantly from the wall.~~
run away from

"Aye." He knew us too," Phillip said quietly. "He said we would ~~run away from~~ him if ever the Temple got him."

But ^{WALKED to work}
They stopped. ~~old~~ Phillip ~~went on~~ slowly ^{ON.}

"God strike you," James said softly to his back.

A BREAK HERE
"How far away is the Tomb?" Matthew asked.

~~continued~~ ^{CONTINUED}
Nobody answered and they ~~continued~~ behind old Phillip.

There is no Page 82
Leid

The old soldier who ran the tavern for officers was almost asleep on his feet. But he knew Maximus Seneca and so he hurried over with a new skinful when Max hoisted another finger. Guiseppe Zellini clasped his fingers over his belly and looked pleasedly at the new wine. It gurgled beautifully into the goblets. The night was good again.

"Your man turned out to be a fool after all, Stupid," Max said.

Guiseppe nodded three times, very fast. He was anxious to agree with Max.

Max said: "You know why he is a fool? You know why?"

Guiseppe shook his head, looking at him. "No, Max, I don't know why."

He thought it was alright to call Max Max. Max was drinking with him again because it had turned out alright.

"Because he wanted to start a revolution on a ~~shoestring~~ shoestring. That's why. Nobody likes to start anything on a shoestring. He's cheap."

The wine was good, no taste of lees at all. Guiseppe thought how, whenever he came in alone, his wine always tasted of lees. It was good to come in here with Max. Especially as how Max would be First ~~Centurion~~ ^{Captain} now.

yet he wants to start a
"No swords, no spears, no nothing," Max said. "And ~~shoestring~~ revolution
So what does he get? He gets put up. Ha, ha — how do you like that, Guiseppe? He gets put up!"

"He gets put up high!" Guiseppe trumpeted happily at the laughing wax-fruit face.

"He's going out in the morning — going out and up!"

"And who will be out there to put him up?" Max asked ~~roadly~~ ^{JOVIALLY.} "Who will be out there nailing him up?"

Guiseppe ~~went~~ ^{SAT} back on the wooden form and ~~jerked his head from side to side as an~~ ^{HELD UP HIS GOBLET IN A TOAST.}
~~after being proposed.~~ "The First," he said. "The bloody First ^{MOCK} ~~Captain.~~ ^{Captain.}"

~~The wax-fruit face stilled again and~~ ^{OUT OF THE WAX-FRUIT FACE.} Max's eyes blazed ~~at him.~~

"Say, the former First," he whispered venomously. "I will be the First. And you, you fat ~~ex-crucifier~~ ^{made} ex-crucifier, you will get pushed up a rung."

It ~~was~~ a grand noise in Guiseppe's head. I will get pushed up a rung.

Guiseppe looked coyly down at his thick ~~fingers~~ fingers, happiness swelling ^{very} inside him. It was good, ~~good~~, good. He dived for the goblet and drained it at a quaff. Max Seneca watched him, his lips curled in a sneered.

"You, going up a rung, [!] you fat hog."

Guiseppe grinned at him. "How did you work it, Max," he breathed. "How did you?"

Max grinned and leaned back, admiration for himself running out of him.

"Easy. I went to the chief and pointed out to him that everyone knew that the woman had had the Nazarene at her house last night and that since the cloak was a rich ^{somebody in her household.} one, it must belong to ~~her~~. But that our Janus could not be expected to prosecute the matter too stoutly, ^{AND} since, ^I I stopped there. Just ~~there~~ — since. See? Then I shrugged and said Janus is the governor's nephew and perhaps the wisest course would be to tell the governor so he could speak with his erring nephew. I hinted that, done that way, the governor couldn't be mad at anyone in Fort Antonia for hauling his nephew over the coals. The poor chief swallowed it, hook, line and sinker. He ~~didn't~~ ^{didn't} know ^{that} what old Annas ^{in after Janus, nor that} was after, ~~nor how far~~ ^{hand him over} old Pont Pilate will go to save his own fat ~~carcass~~ ^{carcass.}"

Guiseppe ~~stared~~ ^{goggled} at him. "You had 'em!" he breathed hoarsely. "You had 'em all!" ^{ascended his old}

Max gave a short, barking chuckle. The heavy lids ~~ascended~~ ^{ascended} eyes and he slyly looked ~~back~~ at the barman. The old soldier hurried over with a new skinful, his heavy hips jerking and flat feet slapping the floor.

"You need a whipping to put some speed into you," Max told him softly.

"And you reckon Janus wont find the boy, Max?" Guiseppe asked.

"I think he will not, he's a gentleman," Max sneered.

CHAPTER 15

Pilate sent for Janus Aurelius and awaited him in a bare ante-room. Janus noted ^{IN} a brief scrutiny that now no couchful of heaping cushions awaited his comfort. The room was rinsed clean ~~as~~ as a whistle and it went into him, ~~swiftly~~ swiftly, that the draught of physic his uncle had spoken of, was about to be handed to him. He saluted stiffly. Nothing showed on his face.

But his uncle's fleshy face had hardened and his mouth was arrogant and punishing. ^{THE} lines of cruelty extended down and away from his nostrils; made his nose ~~pinched~~ pinched, ^{FIRST CAPTAIN.} with impatience. The pupils of his eyes were pinpoints directed at the ~~centurion~~ centurion. He met Janus standing.

His face was that of a man ready to rave. He did not, ^{RAVE.} His words were round and soft as fruit. As poisoned fruit.

"You poor fool," he said.

Janus had seen legionnaires being whipped; big, strong fellows throbbing with the lust of life and passion and a certain rough-hewed pride, taking the lash on their backs without flinching and dying ~~and dying in their eyes~~ only in their eyes. He felt now as he supposed they must have felt, ~~humiliated~~ humiliated.

Pilate's fat and feline body did a strange movement under his robes.

"Your lusts lead you to this. Your stupid lust for a Jewish woman has led you into betraying your trust."

His mind said, Wait, Janus, wait and learn. Said it sternly to the wildness rising inside him.

"I gave you the strongest hint possible tonight. ^{Annas told me of you and the Jews and that he was sure you would do nothing} I laid down a specific thing for you to do. When you told me tonight that your men were seeking him ~~not her, but him~~ I took it for your soldierly caution. But, I went further. I told you, specifically, to scour the city and spare nobody. Now, I learn from your commanding officer that you have not arrested her ^{himself} — even although the High Priest showed you her family initials stitched into the cloak. Do you know what this means?"

^{Wait} Wait, Janus. Quiet down, man. But she couldn't have been in the Garden? She was reckless, but not that reckless?

"It is no use your pleading, ~~that~~ now it has been discovered, ^{THAT} it was her son who wore

AND SO

the cloak, you are freed of responsibility. Your duty was to arrest her. You have not done so. I suppose you know the penalty."

— 0.

Pilate's tongue crept out and ~~licked~~ ^{licked} furtively along his lips, as if it ^{DID NOT} ~~wanted~~ ^{TO BE SEEN.}

"You will be broken," he said softly. "You will be broken and sent back ~~to Rome~~ ^{AND I WILL PROTECT MYSELF.} to Rome. Its either you or ^{ME} for the Temple, Janus. There is just one chance. It is for you to find the boy before ~~the~~ Annas' men get to him. Its either you or ^{ME,} and I have no intention of letting those Hebrew swine get the better of me!"

UNDERLINE

— SPACE —

ALL OF HIS.

WHEN YOU RETURNED TO ROME IN DISGRACE, THEY ^{ALL THE WAY} took you up the ~~the~~ Appian Way, ~~and~~ They made you walk from the time you entered the gate. ^{NO HORSEBACK FOR THE BROKEN OFFICER.} You walked between double ranks of ~~armies~~ ^{legionnaires} flanking you; ^{ALONE EXCEPT FOR THE STRAY} curs who seemed to know you were now one of them, slipping ^{ING} between the legs of the soldiers and yelping ^{ING} at your heels. The manacles at your wrists rubbed sore with the yanks the soldiers gave to them, and the leg irons jangled on the paving stones. Everybody ^{officers} turned out to see you march in, for it was an event, for ~~centurions~~ were seldom brought in that way. ^A And it was such an occasion, that even the ladies turned out on the balconies to see you, and some laughed every time you stumbled because of the leg irons, and others were sorry for you. Which was worse. For you would begin to be sorry for yourself and show it; and the rabble who liked nothing better than to see you sorry ^{BEING} for yourself, bent back ^{wards,} with their bellies high and ugly and ^{SHAKING} with laughter. ~~your~~ ^{your} ~~irons~~ ^{irons} went clank clank over the stones as you dragged yourself along and mostly by this time, you were in tatters, for the rabble had followed their curs and had slipped their dirty talons between the ranks and were pulling at your ^{CLOTHES.} But when you got near to the Forum Romanum, the soldiers tightened their ranks again, and you could hold up your head, if the guts was still in you. Then, if you were lucky, they executed you.

But sometimes you weren't ^{LUCKY} and they turned you ^{FREE} and you had to ^{learn to live with it.} ~~learn to live with it.~~

SPACE

Pilate said softly: "I see you're coming to your senses. Go, ~~and~~ Janus. You haven't much time."

CHAPTER 16

They went out from the chair-court like great lizards, their bodies clinging to the ground, and Ben Legion found the mouth of the passage they had been heading for when the Temple police had seen them, and they ^{turned} ~~slid~~ into it. They had him by the neck again and ~~he~~ ^{HE} was hauled in after them like a short length of rope. They halted in the passage and then they sent him up the line, hand to hand, until Ben Legion's hand closed over him at the head of the line.

Ben Legion took him and ~~slapped him~~ raised his face from off the cobbles and shook him into consciousness. He came out of it with curiosity for the unfamiliar dark and the pain at his cheek where the cobbles had bruised him. The ^{darkness} ~~darkness~~ in his mind opened slowly until memory came back with a rush. He cried out and Ben Legion ^{SLAPPED} ~~hit~~ him ~~with~~ GENTLY ^{ON} mouth with the back of his hand until he stopped.

But he still remembered how the men had fallen with their hands cupped undersides, just like children falling into bed. And he also remembered how the Legions had worked when the men fell and the sort of sounds the knives had made. He was sure he would never forget the ^{soft} ~~gentle~~ sounds. ~~They were gentle sounds, with soft hands.~~

~~His mouth was numbed when Ben Legion hit him again and he grew determined then, not to cry out again.~~

"You shouldn't have run," Ben Legion said, shaking him. "You shouldn't have run, boy, and those gentlemen would be alive. You killed them, boy. You didn't ought to kill them. Its Romans we want, not Hebrews like ourselves. Why did you kill them, boy?"

The line had drawn up into itself and now there was a ^{circle} ~~hole~~ about him.

"Why did you kill them, boy?"

"Why did you kill the poor fellows, boy?"

"First, up; then, down — skeeyah. That's how the ^{KNIVES} ~~men~~ went."

He could not stand it any longer. "Stop! Stop it! ~~men~~ I killed nobody!"

The silence closed in at the end of his shriek and he could hear their breathing.

He sat up and felt dizzy at first at the effort, but strength afterwards crept up his legs and down his arms and he shook his head to clear it.

Ben Legion said: "Now you are with us for sure, boy. We can never let you go again. You saw us in sin tonight."

He was not sure what sin meant. But he was sure it meant no good. He knew of it, vaguely, as to do wrong. But it was not exactly that. You could be quite wrong and be quite brave at the same time. As he would be later when he went to the Wall and had all those faces ~~stare~~ below, staring up at him and fearing for him. ^{WRONG WAS ONE. SINFUL WAS ANOTHER.} He had an idea you could not be sinful and ^{BE} brave at the same time.

Other people had spoken of sin. Annas, at whose memory he could spit. He spat and Ben Legion chuckled. Judas — the memory was not felicitous. Felicitous was a word of Ben-Rasha's. Everything was felicitous or not felicitous for Ben-Rasha. People said Ben-Rasha was a sinner and Ben-Rasha was old and dirty and his beard was mean. Saul, too.

Saul said his mother was living in sin and he had wondered what Saul meant. Saul said it, with his eyeballs glancing upward under the lids and Saul's big-boy friends had grinned. And he hadn't been certain whether they grinned because of the things Saul could do with his eyeballs or whether it was because she lived in sin. So, afterwards, he had asked Judas when the band was in Jerusalem for a feast day. ^{Judas, his friend, who had hunted ~~corrupt~~ with him.} Surely Judas had not been speaking the truth. Surely the Nazarene had approved of her. Otherwise, why had the Nazarene come to his house for the Passover? And had ridden the most splendid ass in their stable, to come to the Passover? He could spit when he remembered the stupidity of Saul and Judas. S
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"Spit on your own feet, half of a fool," Ben Legion growled at his ear.

"How do you sin?" John Mark asked quickly. "How do you sin, Legion?"

Everybody stopped chuckling ~~at Ben Legion's words~~ then and he ~~could~~ could hear the crickets in the wall, so silent it was, and his head felt heavy. He felt as if they had pressed a hot thing to it and were pulling his teeth with pincers. Such was the silence.

Ben Legion nudged him roughly and grumbled: "Come along. No more of your games."

He went along with ~~his~~ the back of his neck in the grip again. He strained his neck up to keep his bruised cheek from being laid open by the rough pavement. He thumped the pavement suddenly ~~and shook~~ with his fist and shook his head stubbornly. One of the Legions knuckled him on the side of his head for that, but he was uncaring.

He knew he was right. He was right. He had thought it out. Judas had sinned only in bringing the Temple into it. ^{WAS THE THING THAT} That ~~was~~ had the dirty in it and was ~~therefore~~ therefore sinful. Judas should have gone back to the Zealots and left the stupid fishermen to stew. Then he would have gone with him. But he had to hate Judas ~~for~~ for he had brought the Temple into

it. He was sorry for Judas but he could not be with him. He was sure that when it was all over, Judas would be back, wanting to be friends again. He, John Mark, would have to be firm and ~~say~~ ^{ADULTS} say no. He was finished with the Nazarene's men. He was finished with the Zealots too. ~~They~~ ^{ADULTS} needed looking after every turn of the way. They screeched too much and flew blind like the bats above his head now, beating their wings against the wall. He was too busy about his own business to be looking after them. Because of them, he was here working for nothing tonight and ~~was~~ ^{wearing} himself out.

^{earnestly,}
No, he said ~~was~~ ^{FLYING} fanning at a ~~bat~~ ^{bat}, I am finished with the fishermen.
^{had been}

. If the Legions ~~was~~ ^{less} given to crawling through filthy alleys, he may have given them the benefit of his ~~own~~ ^{frustration} ~~experience~~; but, as it was, he was against them too. In fact, he was alone. Even although he was being dragged along by the smelly Crawlers. In fact, if he really wanted to, he could fox them right now. He felt very cunning and grinned, his bruised face painful ~~and~~.

They could not know that he only went with them because it suited his purpose until he was ready for the Wall. The Legions knew all the secret places and he could hide with them until the time came. Then he would show them whether they could hold him. He was no heavy-footed Temple police. In the morning, after he was through with the Wall, he would collect his mother and have Janus give them safe conduct out of the city. He would be safe from the priests in daylight. The Temple had not dared to touch the Nazarene in daylight. Not even that day when he had entered the city with all the people hailing him as the Messiah. ~~He was not the one who had been~~

O, not to remember the stupidities of that day ^{WHEN THE NAZARENE HAD COME!} O, to flop along eternally, as a turtle, as he was doing now. To hide in the dark. To burrow forever in this stinking spy's cloak and not even to raise your head for food.

What a run he had made that morning! Swallow on your shame and ^{JUST} remember what a run you had made the morning ~~when~~ you awoke and learnt from your mother that the Nazarene had returned to Jerusalem, ^{THE NAZARENE} was waiting just outside the city while he sent to borrow the splendid grey Jack. Other times, ^{he} had come in afoot. Why wasn't he coming in afoot now? Because Judas had been right, you said. And you were out of bed and ~~out of the~~ house and flashing your heels like a racing goat across the Kedron and up ^{to} Olivet.

A thousand years from now, when he was recovered from his shame, he would tell it all to his mother. Even if he only looked at her, she would understand. She was like that

ALL

But he would tell it ^{to} her until he was empty and could come out of the dark. ~~But he would tell it to her until he was empty and could come out of the dark.~~

IS STILL

STET

Then, if ~~the~~ the Nazarene ^{IS STILL} at Jerusalem (they would be living at - at Capernaum, perhaps, ^{STET} by that time, out of the reach of the Temple), I ^{WILL} quit school for ~~that~~ day and go out

to the cave near the Bethany road where they always stayed when they were at Jerusalem. That is the place to which I took ~~the~~ Cousin

Demmy that night when I thought he would have made a good officer for the army which ^{Judas and} I thought the Nazarene would soon be forming. There ^{PLACE PLACE WHERE} the fisher-

men ^{NAMED} ~~and~~ me Coxswain and made me sit with them while the Nazarene talked. And then

my nostril ^{WILL} be free of the smell of Saul.

THE NAZARENE HAD

^{He} talked of the legions he would gather for his army and the kingdom he would form. And I believed him. All of us believed him. We believed him and the fishermen ^{shouted that the} would die for him and I shouted too.

But sometimes the things he said about his kingdom were not very plain and then Judas would sit silent and unmoving while the others talked among themselves and quarrelled about what he meant. ^{And} I would sit and think how Saul would turn green with envy when he saw me marching in with the Nazarene's army; and wait until afterwards when Judas would tell me

what ^{THE NAZARENE} meant. ^{IT WAS THE TIME THE NAZARENE AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAD DEPARTED ON} the long journey ^{AND DID NOT RETURN TO} Jerusalem until long afterwards.

"We will come back with a big army, Coxswain," Judas said to ^{HIM} on the last day when ^{THEY} went to hunt coneys. Judas ^{COLLECTED} food for the band and he only bought when he could not hunt. He was a great hunter and he could knock a ~~coney~~ coney from under a rock better than ~~than~~ even ~~the~~ Cousin Demmy.

You remember the morning they came back, ~~my~~ mother?

She would remember and perhaps he would not have to tell her.

But he would remember for a thousand years ~~he~~ how he had raced through the city and out of the gate and down the road then up and across the viaduct, running out there on the stony track with wonder wide in his head at the multitude of people running along with him. He had been a little frightened at the multitude of people, all taller than he, and he running close to the ground with the mountainous bodies heaving and swaying ^{AROUND} him; elbows bruising his ribs and ~~beating~~ ~~into~~ his chest, ~~the~~ the ends of robes whipping across his face, ~~like~~ ~~stings~~.

The run slowed to a walk when ^{THEY REACHED THE} steep of the hill, ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~as~~ They slowed ^{AT THE} a whisper of song ^{THE SONG} had risen ~~and~~ rapidly, ^{swept} to a storm. They had sung the great national

OF KING DAVID,

songs ^h from the Book of Psalms, and he had looked up into the faces around him, ^{ONES,} the bearded ones and the smooth ^{THE FACES,} all broken up in passion. And he had walked with his ~~eyes~~ face turned up, looking into ~~them~~ and stumbled into a bearded Zealot. He recognized the man, Hakuk, a friend of Judas. And Hakuk bellowed a laugh as he straightened the boy and pushed a ^{BRANCH} ~~piece~~ of olive ~~branch~~ into his hand and shouted above the din:

"Sing, lad! Or burst your throat with howling if like me you have no voice!"

He remembered how he had gaped foolishly at Hakuk and had thought it queer that he had never noticed before that one of Hakuk's eyes ~~was~~ was brown and the other blue and Hakuk had slapped him on the back and muttered soberly:

"Aye, come along lad. He said ^{THAT HIS NEW KINGDOM WILL BE} of such children as you, ~~that his kingdom~~ No doubt he meant it will take time to kill all the Romans, and ^{the} old ones like me may not be here to see the finish. ^{YOU WILL BE GROWN UP BY THEN, CITIZENS OF THE NEW KINGDOM."}

The crowd came between them at that moment. And he had gone on, waving the branch ^{WITH} the rest of them and singing as loudly as he could, bobbing about like a small boat on the waves, roughed by a thoughtless shoulder then saved from falling underfoot by a helping hand, ~~and still~~ moving up the hill in the wildness and quite ~~not~~ losing himself in the ^{WIDE SPREAD} ~~noise~~ of noise until, near the crest of the hill, the din and movement was abruptly stilled. He found himself remembering how in the kitchen the cooks used to clamp the lid over a ^{BUBBLING} ~~warmed~~ pot. ^{SUCH WAS THE SODDEN STILLNESS.}

He did not halt. He used his small body to advantage, worming through to the head of the multitude. And then he had seen ~~THE NAZARENE~~ ^{THE NAZARENE}.

SPACE-

This time of year, the ~~yellow~~ yellow buttercups came up ^{at} the sides of the road and the ~~shoots~~ shoots of new grass were tender and very green. ^{AS HOUSE} ~~He could remember too~~ that the old hay in the depleted stacks, no longer fresh mown, were yellow and sweetly mouldy and after you had rolled in ~~it~~ it, it clung to your ~~clothes~~ clothes and your hair and the girls stood still while you picked the hay out of their hair and from down the backs of their frocks and you felt ^{HOW} ~~the~~ warm ^{THEY WERE;} and their eyes when they looked at you were very dry and their faces serious and you yourself hot, then cold, then hot and cold again and you left there quickly. And Saul would look at you leaving there quickly and would say something to one of the bigger girls and back her head would go until ~~you~~ you saw her ^{ALL OF HER} ~~throat~~ and out the laughter would come to flush hotly through ^{MAKE} ~~stumble~~.

He remembered the bright sunlight and the green grass and the smell of the sun in old cut hay and he felt crawl inside ~~as a lizard~~ ~~at Ben Legion~~ and the others who ^{CRAWLED ON} ~~went along~~ the slimy stones like lizards at the bottom of a well and took him along with them. But he bit back his anger and went stubbornly along with them, thinking with satisfaction that he could leave them anytime he wanted. Anytime at all. He had it all worked out now and they couldn't ~~hold him~~ catch him as before. He would bound up and be away before that crawly hand on the back of his neck knew what it was about. Meanwhile, it wasn't bad to be a Quarry. Later, when he went to the Wall, he would even be a bigger Quarry. He wondered how Judas was feeling, now that he was a Quarry too.

— SPACE —

Judas.

He had not seen Judas at first, that morning. He had stood there ^{at} the head of the multitude when they halted suddenly near the crest of the hill. Had stood there bursting with pride at the way the band had worked it. He could have told the gaping faces around him that ~~Simon~~ Simon Peter would have made the familiar gesture, closing the Twelve around the Nazarene to keep the press of the crowd from him. It was through such a circle he had slipped the day when Simon Peter had cuffed him on the head and the quiet voice had rebuked the rough fisherman.

But this morning there was nothing but pride in ~~him~~ him when big Simon made the gesture and they ^{BAND} ~~went~~ closed in around the Nazarene. But the Nazarene stood on higher ground than they and he was plain ^{BY IN SIGHT OF} ~~in~~ the crowd. And he had heard the whispers around him: Its him — the one with the uncut beard. And from the doubtful ones: He's too young to be a Messiah; And from some women ~~from~~ of Capernaum who giggled and spoke louder so that the Jerusalem women would know they knew the family well: He's the ^{BEST LOOKING} ~~one~~ of Mary's sons. AND ANOTHER SMOOTHED HIS GOWN AND ~~SAID~~ SAID, "AND THE BRIGHT EST TOO, HE WAS READING AND ARGUING BEFORE BAR-MITZVAH."

But not even they could be as proud as he, for if he was boastful, he could have turned to them all and say look, he wears the blue cloak my mother sent him — the blue linen that is brother to this one I wear.

The Nazarene had not looked at them. ~~There was nothing there to see~~ His eyes were roaming about over their heads. ~~There was nothing there to see~~ There was nothing there to see but the towers and the domes of Jerusalem and he had been a little peeved that the Nazarene would not look at them so that he could wave at him and show all these around that he knew him best of all. But since the Nazarene would not look at him so that he could wave to him, he had commenced searching the band

His hand was held halfway up, ready to wave the instant he caught an eye, but he had caught no eye ~~although~~ ^{and} after awhile his hand commenced making tiny little gestures as if he was lying among the buttercups at the side of the road hunting butterflies; and still, awfully, none looked his way and then like an earthquake he discovered what his hand was doing and shame flushed him to the roots of his hair and crawled about his scalp as he drew back the hand and hid it away inside his cloak. He looked away, swallowing his bitter hurt; and then he had seen Judas.

Judas was not in the circle about the Nazarene. He had drawn aside and his eyes were fixed on the Nazarene's face. ^{John Mark} ~~He~~ forgot his shame. Excitement ^{flared} ~~came~~ up inside him. He knew now why the Nazarene was looking at the city. He was ~~searching for~~ looking for the softest spots where he could throw his army. Judas had said it. No doubt there was an army at his back, over the brow of the hill. He looked quickly back at Judas and saw that the Zealot, Hakuk, who had given him the branch to wave, had gone over to Judas' side. Swiftly, ^{pair.} John Mark broke from the crowd and darted to the ~~side of the crowd~~.

He was there in time to hear Hakuk say: "Well —?" the question in his voice. "Will he —?"

And Judas shrugged and said nothing but stared at the Nazarene's face.

Hakuk asked again, impatiently this time: "Will he?"

Still nothing from Judas. And didn't he see who stood by his side?

So he must tug at his elbow and say angrily: "Has the Ishcariot lost his tongue?"

And Hakuk whirled at the sound of his voice and drew back an arm as ^{if} ~~to~~ cuff him but Judas halted him with a sharp word.

Then, "Hello, Cox," he said in the ~~same~~ voice which always seemed to hold a note in it, brittle as a piece of slate. And he had known times when the slate cracked and he wanted to go quickly as when he was introduced to a stranger. But now there was no crack. "Hello, Cox, ^{see,} we're back as I told you." *[EAGERLY HE HAD BEGUN WITH THE QUESTIONS.]*

~~See, we're back as I told you.~~ *[Where did you go? Where did you travel? Through all of Galilee, I'll bet!]*

The smile of Judas with many teeth to it, the quick look at the Zealot standing grim and silent. *[*"Galilee, boy?" and a hand roughing ^{HIS} ~~his~~ hair. "Galilee? That's a Sabbath Day's journey! What would you say if I told you we went clear to the borders of Tyre and Sidon!"

Your mouth agape like a whiting caught in a net, while all the names you had heard in

school rose in your head and shook themselves free of dust and still you could hardly reckon the cities and the towns they had passed through for a hundred and more miles lay between Jerusalem and the border country. By the time you had wakened your mind to speak again, you could see that he had gone away/^{from you}again although he stood beside you.

For his eyes had returned to the Nazarene whose hands were now upheld.

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CHAPTER 17

JOHN MARK

He knew they were near the Temple when they halted. For he could hear the tiny gongs, which marked the hours, going off like a stick ~~ran~~ along the iron grid of a window which they sometimes used to do at Ben-Rasha's house when Saul said let's disturb Ben-Rasha who must be mingling with his Phoenicians. He never knew what Saul meant, although the ~~other~~ older boys laughed. But it was fun to see old Ben-Rasha's head in the red skull cap pop from the window and issue curses at them. And Saul could curse him back. Saul did it with many Greek words which lifted and struck like things alive and they made old Ben-Rasha pop back quickly. Saul was a champion. A big champion. But he would beat him in the morning. He felt it struggle and stand up in his belly: He would beat him in the morning.

They were near the Temple for he could smell it. There was a smell for the Temple and a smell for school and a smell for his house. Take him ^{into} any of these blindfolded and he would know where he was. Now he was near the Temple. He did not like to be near the Temple. The mad crawlers had crawled their way through the alleys and the filthy passages and their crazy minds had brought them right back to the Temple. He fought to be off his elbows and knees and to whirl back the way they had come.

"Place a knee in the small of his back, Demas Legion," Ben's voice said calmly. "The young ~~lord~~ lord is determined to be roasted on a Roman spit."

They had him. They had him fixed like ^{the} slabs of ^{FISH-MEAT} ~~skewered~~ skewered to the boards in Johnny Boanerges' father's fish-shop. The bony knee of Demas Legion held him firmly to the ground. He turned his face sideways so his nose would not rub on the stones and spat. He told them some of the words he had ~~got~~ got off Saul.

Ben Legion chuckled. "You never learnt those from old Gamaliel, young lord. I was ~~schooled~~ schooled by old Gamaliel."

One of his men matched his chuckle. "You ~~never went to school in your life,~~ never went to school in your life, Ben Legion. You were schooled under a bridge."

"Put it up, Abram Legion," Ben grumbled. "You were forsaken at birth."

"Put it up all of you," Demas Legion said. "My knee is out to forsake me because of this wicked boy under it. He will not be still."

Ben Legion bent nearer the boy. "Be still, young lord, or I will tie you with ropes."

"I was tied with ropes once, by the Temple police," Demas Legion chuckled again. "Near, sawed me in ~~in~~ two."

"The Romans do it sometimes — saw you in two with ropes. Leather ropes. Saw it done once at Philipi. They put the dry leather around you, tight until it almost ^{cuts} ~~into~~ into the the flesh. Then they wet it, and wet it. The man cried something awful as the rope shrank and went ~~in~~ in and what was in came out."

They couldn't make him vomit. He hadn't vomitted back there in the alley when they - did what they did to the Temple police.

"You will make the lad sick, Joshua Legion," Ben Legion said gruffly. "Put it up. What's keeping that filthy Legion?"

"Perhaps he cant find Peter in Annas' house," ^{Abram} ~~Ben~~ Legion said. "Or perhaps Peter will not come for his ~~little~~ little friend."

"Perhaps he has forsook him," Demas said above him.

"Yes, they forsook even their son of god," Abram Legion said.

"No, their son of god forsook them," Demas Legion demurred. "He went with the Romans. This son of god wants to go up higher." He wants to wear the purple with the Romans. ~~up higher.~~

Abram Legion chuckled. "He will go up high all right."

"How high up do they go?" Joshua Legion asked. "Anybody ever measured it?"

"I never measured it but I hear the law is ten feet up," Abram Legion said.

"To the crosspiece? Or to the top?"

"To where they put your nameplate, you dunce. At the top where they nail your ~~name~~ amount of money you stole." lamented name and the ~~high the name you were crucified to have done.~~

"If its sedition, they put the things you said."

"It must be fun to be crucified," Joshua Legion whispered dreamily.

"Better fun to watch it," Abram Legion said happily.

"But think what you could do to your crucifier's head when he bends to see that the foot ropes are holding taut," Joshua Legion pointed out ~~the~~.

Ben Legion slapped his palm hard to the stones. "Put it up, all of you!" he ^{roared.} suddenly

He could put them all out of his mind. He felt the sickness in his belly again and he locked his lips ~~together~~ together. He could put them all out of his mind by remembering other things.

He could remember as yesterday the Nazarene standing on the hill and his hands

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uplifted over them. As ~~the~~ ^{had} Judas, he ^{had} turned his head and watched ~~the~~ Nazarene.

The hum of talk went down ~~it went down~~ so you could hear the whirr of the wings ^{swallows} ~~the~~ dipping into the valley. He could hear the ~~beat~~ ^{pounding} of his own heart. And when he heard the creak of leather, loud as anything, he twisted his head and saw it was the leather band which Hakuk wore to support his water bottle creaking every time the fat Zealot ~~breathed~~. He could smell the leather and he felt ~~the~~ ^{SHARPLY} the thought of Hakuk's ~~leather~~ leather belt descending on his shoulder. Then he stopped that thinking with a discomfitted grin as he remembered he was not Hakuk's son and turned back to watch the Nazarene. He was sure now the Nazarene would speak. ^{The boy} ~~he~~ leaned forward from his hips, his eyes shining and something ready to open in him.

^{the Nazarene had said. AND FOR HE}
"Jerusalem," John Mark almost cried aloud. ^{SPOKEN**} ~~he~~ HAD NEVER HEARD THE NAME OF HIS CITY ~~yet~~.

"Jerusalem," the Nazarene said again. "I have bared my bosom for you, so often."

O, the aching glory of it. O, the bugles to it. Such a tongue as not even Cousin Demmy possessed. Such a tongue as nobody possessed. ^{STALE OLD WORDS AS} Not My friends or My people — nor the ugly ~~one~~, Fellow citizens, which the Zealots always used. None of the rusty old words which the bazaar talkers used at their rusty old meetings. ^{SAUL WAS VERY GOOD WITH WORDS.} ~~Words were~~ ^{IT WAS SAID THAT SOMEDAY HE WOULD} ~~be a scribe. Maybe after he~~ ^{HAD BEATEN SAUL AT THE WALL TOMORROW, HE WOULD TRY TO BEAT HIM AS A SCRIBE.} ~~his face seriously set, John Mark nodded emphatically.~~

Ben Legion's rough demand for silence ^{SPACE} ~~and~~ quieted his companions. John Mark turned his head and rubbed his mouth hard on the sleeve of the cloak. Demas Legion's knee squeezed a little warning for him to be still. He wondered why they ~~waited~~ waited so long. He thought ^{ABOUT TOO MANY THINGS WHEN HE WAS FORCED} ~~to~~ to be still. He had found out that the best ~~way~~ way to avoid thinking was to run very fast.

Like that morning outside the city.

○ — SPACE — ○

Even before he heard the grunt from Hakuk and had seen the man stalk away from Judas' side, he had sensed something was wrong. ^{**TAKE IN} A multitude of ideas had been crowding into his mind ^{THAT MORNING} so he had hardly heard the words of the Nazarene, ~~which had~~ ^{the Nazarene} ~~he~~ He had been thinking that when ~~he~~ gave the word and the army commenced the move on Jerusalem, he would ask Judas to remind the Nazarene that once he had said ^{that} of such ^{as JOHN MARK, the YOUTHFUL} ~~new~~ would be the kingdom. ^{underline} Then he will beckon me forward and I will march at the head of Nimrod, our own ~~own~~.

SO PURELY BEFORE, THE GUTTERS RAN WITH CLEAN
SPRING WATER, THE HOUSES WERE SCRUBBED TILL THEY
SHONE, AND ALL THE PRIESTS WERE GENTLE.

(95)

In the crowd, John Mark had found ^{several} ~~some~~ boys he knew, and was leading them in shouting the popular ~~xxx~~ Nationalist slogan: "Hail ~~to the son of David!~~" The slogan, although traditional to Hebrew history which awaited the ~~new~~ coming of the Messiah, also held an undersong for the grand movement which the Zealots were organising. John Mark had heard of it from Judas. Judas, with a cheerful chuckle, pointed out to John Mark that if the Nazarene was ~~as~~ accepted as the son of David, then, as a chip of the old block, he would not only be a man after God's own heart, as was read ^{from} ~~in~~ the scrolls ~~about the Messiah~~, in the synagogues, but would combine the qualities of mighty warrior and great king and be "twice the size of the colossus at Rhodes." Such a man would ~~benefit~~ have all Israel following him in the ~~revolt~~ against Rome. ~~The revolt the Zealots, Judas' political party, was organising.~~

the political party which Judas had joined,

ZEALOTS' REVOLT

underline
unbroken colt from our stable, so wild that ~~xxx~~ even I was not yet allowed to ride him. But the Nazarene mounted him and he was gentle as a dove, ears unpointed, flanks quiet, face satisfied as if he had just finished eating from a mound of hay taller than the Joppa Gate. And this reminds me that I will say to the Nazarene that the Joppa Gate is softer to breach

centurion who guards it is always in wine and so it is softer to breach. And although this will not be really true, yet I must have him to pass through the Joppa gate, for that way he must pass the school; so I will see the green in Saul's face when I march by with the army. ~~NAZARENE'S~~

But with the ~~book which told him his eyes~~ ^{TRULY AMAZING AND WONDERFUL IDEA RITING IN HIS MIND, HE HAD TURNED TO} Judas and Hakuk, ^{TO INFORM THEM OF HIS PLAN.} And then as he saw what passed between their eyes, ^{THE DISAPPOINTMENT AND ANGER,} he had known for sure. The Nazarene would not fight. ^{HE HAD MISSED THE WORDS BUT IT WAS PLAIN IN THE EYES OF JUDAS AND HAKUK.} There was no army hidden beyond the brow of the hill.

A little sob ~~had~~ ^{HAD} broken from him before he could hold it back. He turned away from there, walking stiff-legged until he was clear of the crowd, then broke into a wild run ^{and} disappeared into the yellow sunlight.

— SPACE —

[A DARKER SHADOW WAS THE LEGION RETURNING

~~The Legion returned~~ into the passage, as a darker shadow. Unerringly, he brushed past down beside the others and flopped/ ~~at~~ Ben Legion. He was breathless. But he mumbled it swiftly enough.

"They are removing the Nazarene to Caiaphas' palace. They figure the Nazarene's men will try to ~~rescue him on the way~~ and then they will wipe them out."

^{FISHERMAN'S} "where is the big Simon?" Ben Legion asked quickly.

"He is gone. I hear they tried to get the Zealots to help them rescue the Nazarene, but the Zealots will have nothing to do with it. So they will try it by themselves."

There were moments of silence. Then Ben Legion laughed softly in the darkness.

"Brothers," he said, "tonight, I promise you, you shall whet your blades as never you have whetted them before. Listen."

John Mark heard too. He heard it with his boy's mind trying to run away from the impending horror. He remembered the work those same blades had done in the alley.

"And what of the young lord ~~to whom I kneel although he is~~ beneath me?" Demas Legion asked / DRYLY.

"Why, Demas Legion, bring him along," Ben said. "There is too much promise in the lad not to teach him all we can."

Demas ^{LEERED} ~~smiled~~ ~~broken-toothed~~ BROKEN-TOOTHED AT HIM. "WE ARE ALL YOU HAVE, LITTLE LORD," he said.

if he is the son of David he has to be a mighty warrior, a great King.
Priests heard Mark leading the shouts Matt 21:15

CHAPTER 18

Nicodemus had put down thick ^{EGYPTIAN} carpets on the tiles ~~along his corridors~~ along his corridors and there were small pots ^{OF} ~~with smaller palms growing in them and placed all over the house~~ through like sentinels. Janus Aurelius, striding the corridor, could not hear the sound of his own footfall and, being angry straight through, he wanted to hear his foot hit the tiles and ~~just~~ jarrings right up inside feel the ~~just~~ ~~his head~~ his head. And the potted palms offended him with their sheen of domesticity, put ~~there no~~ their there no doubt by an end of cloth dipped in ~~water~~ oil and rubbed on the leaves. There was ~~a line~~ of light at the bottom of a closed door at the end of the corridor and he strode on towards it, his face cold and set.

He pushed through the heavy door as if it was not there and she did not know how he had found her, but she ^{seemed} glad to see him.

"Janus — Janus, O Janus, you ^{have} ~~must~~ come to help me!" she cried, running towards him.

Nicodemus had not returned and she was alone in the house and had begun to fear for her sanity. For pictures had begun to come alive in her mind. She had begun to see ^{IN HER MIND} the broken ~~little~~ body of her ^{SON} ~~child in her mind~~. She knew the brutality of the Temple guards. She had seen it at work in the court of the Gentiles where their rule was absolute. But now Janus had come and he was a mighty man, ^{HIS HELMET OFF, HIS HAIR WAS RUMPLED. SHE WAS GLAD TO SEE HIM.} ~~from his red hair to his feet planted apart in the doorway and she was glad to see him.~~

"Janus — O Janus — I — I — "

Mary Mark halted her rush. She had been running across the room, scared as a fawn at the ugly pictures she was leaving behind and wanting ~~like a thief~~ to ~~bring up~~ ^{by around her.} against his hard body and have his arms firm ~~to her back~~. But the eyes regarding her from underneath the peak of the metal cap were the eyes of a stranger.

"Wh — what is the matter with you, Janus? You — look so strange — your eyes —!"

"Where is he?" ^{FATHER} the stranger barked.

"^{NICODEMUS} He — he is out with his men —!" Surprise and questions were in her eyes.

"I mean the boy! Where is he?"

The man was bellowing as if he was on the parade ground. He had never treated her like this before. The eyes were blazing out of a face like stone. Was this the ~~red-haired~~ red-haired temper she had heard of among the Romans? Then it was time it met with the black haired one of the Jews. He was daring to use a whip on her. ^{Her palms tingled to meet his} ~~She liked to smack him on the~~

SLAP HIS FACE.

~~ridence with both hands, the right first, then the left, to hit and flash the white~~
~~at her face with some of the blood she felt heating her own.~~

"Are you drunk?" she asked in quick hope, ~~for it could be that he was drunk.~~

She had never seen him drunk. But she had seen Roman soldiers drunk during their
heathen festivals and they were ~~WORSE BRUSQUE THAN WAS~~ ^{over} Janus now, when they were drunk. They turned
over carts and broke windows and howled sad songs in high tenors. And then they wept.

When they were in their cups they wept, for they remembered Rome and how Rome had for-
gotten them. ^{PUSHED THEM OUT INTO THE PROVINCES WHICH THE GODS FORGOT, AND FORGOTTEN,} But she could see that he was not drunk. ~~For he was grinning at her, a~~ ^{THEM,}
~~jeer in it, and her palms stung to put it back inside of him.~~

"You are like all your race," he said through ^{HIS} teeth, ~~in his grin,~~ "clever."

Her eyes opened wide until he could see the whites and then she slapped his face.

Somehow, so swiftly she hardly saw him move, he had imprisoned her wrists.

"That was clever too," he said bleakly, "your pretence."

He would expect her to struggle or to plead now that he hurted her wrists. But she
would not give him that satisfaction. She would stand there in that awkward position
until he saw how ridiculous he looked holding her wrists, and then release her, he would,
blushing like a fool. O, she would humble him at every move.

"You would use anyone for your own ends, wouldn't you — Jewess?"

You fool. You will come back, humbler.

~~It was in her mind, to hate his arrogance~~ ^{A DISLIKE FOR} ~~dragged itself up, reluctantly, from~~ ^{HAD}
A CORNER OF HER MIND. ^{THE SAME} ~~corner~~ ^{WHERE} ~~of her mind~~ ^{lurked} ~~the~~
AWARENESS OF THE ^{DIFFERENCES} ~~BETWEEN THEM, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS.~~
~~the Jews and Jerusalem,~~ ^{IN} ~~the temple were allowed to keep~~ ^{THE} ~~religion~~ ^{and its traditions.} Now and again, Rome found it useful to
remind the JEWS that it RULED. ^{THE HOT RETORT WAS ON HER LIPS. BUT,}

She stared at his white face, ~~stone set.~~ ^{SON,} ~~question opened in her, no, she said,~~ ^{REST CAN WAIT.}
I CANNOT AFFORD A CONTEST.
~~It is not a lottery.~~ I want John. ~~Janus.~~ I want my ~~There~~ ^{YOUR}
JEWESS? THAT WAS CHILDISH. FOR HE LOVES THE JEWS, THIS PAGAN WORSHIPPER OF NUMEROUS RIDICULOUS GODS.
~~Janus, please help me!~~

^{MUST BE A} ~~THERE~~ ^{YOUR} ~~Then it occurred to her that she had not found out the reason for his strange~~

behaviour. ~~She had not found out the reason for his strange~~ ^{behaviour.} ~~She laughed a little~~ ^{She laughed a little}

Something masked his face. His grip opened, and her hands fell.

99

~~"You knew it too early, my dear," he said softly. "You see, I know now, and I have~~

~~known."~~ ^{WOULD NOT} "You knew all along what the priests were after, but you ~~couldn't~~ ^{warn} me,

Would you? How do you know? Perhaps I could have found a way out for all of us. ~~Ah~~ I have

some ^{INFLUENCE.} ~~power.~~ But you preferred to have me kicked back to Rome, stripped, beheaded, anything, so long as your son was safe."

She was coming apart. She felt all of her falling apart. She had to hold on.

"But it will not be so, ~~but~~. Stop shaking your head and hear me. I shall find him.

Then you and your tribe can sing psalms for him, if I know old Annas."

She was dead. Yet he kept on killing her. Couldn't he see she was dead?

Her head moved weakly. "Janus," she said wearily, "I never knew until —"

His thin lips twitched with contempt. "Save your case for the Sanhedrin. Your cousin, Nicodemus will argue it for you. I suppose he is hiding the boy tonight so he can get him out of the city tomorrow. Tell him ^{ITS} ~~that~~ ~~hopeless~~. There are double guards at the gates looking out for him. ~~But~~ I shall have him before morning."

She put her hands up and touched her face like a child; took them down again and stared at her fingers. She looked up at him. This was a stranger. The mouth was too thin and the nostrils flared and the eyes were ~~like~~ knives. She stared and shook her head, her lips working. The tears ~~was~~ were welling up now and they blurred her sight.

"Janus — O Janus — don't you see — I - I —"

She couldn't stop them from filling up and overpouring down her cheeks.

He laughed without mirth, his lips away from his teeth.

"Your history books recall another Jewess. Delilah. Remember her? Except, my dear, that you wont take me to the shearers. I will find your lost lamb and hand him over to Shepherd Annas."

She waited for him to go. A wind blew ^{COLD} ^{THROUGH} the ~~ashes~~ ^{ashes} inside of her.

CHAPTER 19

He was quite lost. They had gone around corners and through passages and up and down stairs, ~~in a manner~~ heedless of caution, in a manner ~~that~~ they had never displayed before. There was no talking among them now. Ben Legion, roving ahead like a driving wind, hurried them on with clucks of his tongue. Demas Legion had let go of the boy's neck but kept firm hold of his hand. John Mark was glad they were walking upright now.

He knew why they had come upright; Ben Legion had said that ^{by} now the priests would have called off the search for him while they ~~took care~~ disposed of the other matter. John Mark knew what the other matter was. It was what Ben Legion had laughed about back there. But he would be stone dead before he would make them know he was sick.

He was bruised and beginning to be weary; but he would be stone dead before he would make Demas Legion know he was tired. He would be stone dead but he would show them. He pumped along in a laboured trot that kept him close to Demas Legion's long lope.

He knew Simeon's Tomb. It was an old brick tomb in a narrow street with a rounded top and two gnarled old almonds which almost met over the roof. He would be up in the almonds, lying out on a branch. All Ben Legion's men would be up there lying ~~along~~ along the branches. Ben Legion said they would be up there until the Temple police ^{had} finished off the Nazarene's men. Then they would drop down among the Temple police. *FINISH THEM OFF.*

There was an ~~empty~~ empty place in his head and a small pain somewhere in his bowels that made his knees wobble as he pushed on behind Demas. He stumbled and Demas kept him upright, ~~by leaning on his arm.~~ ~~He kept his lips stubbornly shut, against the.~~ He would be stone dead *before he made them know he was dog-tired*

He squeezed his eyes shut for an instant and shook his head to free it of such matters. He should not be thinking about stone dead. ^{HE REMEMBERED WHEN HIS} uncle, his father's brother, ~~had~~ died in Capernaum and he had gone down there with his mother for the funeral. He had wandered into the room where the spicers were ^{WORKING ON} ~~with~~ his uncle ^{SIMPLY} because he was forbidden to go in there. He had gone in silently, making like a cat, and he had been there for several minutes in a corner near the foot of the bier before one of the spicers saw him — a man with his jaws so sunken he had been thinking how wonderful it would be to have jaws like those to fill with air and then to slap them suddenly so it made like a ram's horn which the shepherds

them turning over and over on the slab, the ^{stone thing} ~~stone~~ which had been his uncle, ^{Poking} ~~knocking~~ kneading it, and ~~knocking~~ it, and singing hymns to ~~it~~ it, the room full of pungency from the herbs ^{shreds} crushed in their fists and ~~bits~~ of the herbs clinging to the hairs at their wrists and all the way up their forearms to the elbows under their rolled sleeves; and he had thought what a stupid thing it was to pour oils on stone, ^{a person such as his uncle had become, and to} ~~and sing to it, and stone, afterwards, to~~ SING TO IT. AND EVER AFTERWARDS, STONE ^{WAS TO HIM, A SYMBOL OF DEATH.} ~~was a symbol of death.~~

Listen again. He had seen crosses too. He was not ~~supposed~~ supposed to see crosses, for his mother had warned him never, never to use the Ganesh ~~gate~~ Gate. But because she had warned him, he had gone one day with Saul and the boys from the school because a great thief was to be put up outside the gate on the hillock called Golgotha. And moreover Saul had challenged him he couldn't go and watch it without being sick.

He had been sick. He had run from there, sick all through. He had run with his stomach heaving all the way to David Street and had tumbled into her arms with the sickness making him a nasty little green monkey. And she had tightened her mouth while she cleansed him and he had promised never, never to go again.

But he had been quite young then. He would never be sick ~~again~~ at it again. Even if he had to watch — watch some he knew being put up, he would not be sick again. He guessed he wouldn't go all the same.

No, he whispered, I wouldn't go all the same.

"I am an urbane man," Thomas said calmly, ^{responding} ~~answering~~ to John Boanerges' bitter imprecation. "I must talk. I say the matter cannot succeed."

Another false alarm had halted them ~~again~~. Nobody fought to move on again. ^{JOHNNY THUNDER} ~~John Boanerges~~ hunched his back into the angle of the wall and shook his head like an animal in pain. His brother, James, shifted his position so he was closer to him. Phillip wheezed anxiously. He could not see Matthew's face in the dark, ^{FEELING} ~~and~~ alone, he felt useless. He would be of no use here. His chest ached and the phlegm ~~in his throat~~ plugged his throat. When the time came he would be useless.

"Simon," ^{PHILLIP DESPERATELY} ~~he~~ said, "Simon, let us go over it again."

Simon Peter turned his shaggy head. ~~His~~ ^{His} heel and the back of his head were close ^{AGAINST} ~~to~~ the wall, ^{SORT OF} ~~as if~~ fixed there. He spoke carefully, ^{AS IF NEEDED TO HAVE HIS BACK CLOSE TO A WALL.} ~~as if he needed to have his back close to a wall.~~ HIS VOICE LOW. ^{OLD} ~~OLD~~ PHILLIP WONDERED IF THE STRONG TIMBER HAD TURNED TO SAWDUST. WAS ~~THE STRONG TIMBER~~ PETER, THE ROCK, CRUMBLING?

"We wait by the Tomb where they must thin out to pass. When they thin out, we rush

WE GRAB THE MASTER

'em. Jimmy Thunder and me, ~~and~~ ^{and} make a run for it." He stopped, a part ~~of~~ of the silent wall again.

"Then — what?" Thomas asked, an odd triumph in his voice.

"Then we release you among them, you louse, and you make them scratch!" John said / savagely.

"Then we keep them engaged as long as we can," Matthew said.

"Right!" Thomas exclaimed. "Three of us against that mob — Phil is out. My God, three of us can keep them off your heels only as long as it takes them to climb over us!"

"Two of us," John said, "the revenue man and me. Nobody climbs over a louse. They ~~squelch~~ squelch ~~in~~ you."

"Why cant you keep them off long enough?" James demanded. ~~Will you be satisfied your head between your knees and whisper your fear for your friends? Or will you throw your life into place for this once?~~

DOUBTFUL THOMAS IS TALKING SENSE.

Thomas is talking sense, old Phillip thought. He pulled his cloak closer about him. The wind, chuting through the narrow street, was chill. It was dark and the only sounds were their voices and the hard scurry of dried almond leaves in the gutter. Thomas was talking sense but a man could talk sense and yet not be right. The Temple guards would go through them like reapers through a wheat field. Up to that point, Thomas was right.

But after that, he is wrong. I am older than any of them. My bones tell me I wont be long with them now. On the heights, and in chill weather, my bones tell me with tongues as hot knives. **BUT YET, THIS IS HOW OLD PHILLIP THINKS:**

- ~~even~~ ^{THAT} even the brave and young bull, Simon Peter, ~~who like me and his brother Andrew are from BETHSAIDA...~~
- even this Jimmy Thunder, all leather and with the endurance of a building; ^{and his brother,}
- aye, the passionate John, with a scope for love too big for his frame;
- or my Matthew, with the cunning of a fox and entitled to every right ^{to} life for the attention he pays to it;
- or poor Thomas himself, ~~kinsman to Jesus and~~ ^{the} concealing pain behind his buffoonery;
- and those others, scattered on this Night of The SCATTERING, my friend BARTHOLOMEW;
- I would put them all on the altar, without pity, if it would save that one in

Annas' hands. I would whip them with words and anoint them with words and slip them forward until they lay on the ~~altarstone,~~ altarstone, if they could be taken instead.

He took his hands from the wall and pushed them inside the cloak for warmth.

In

But it will not be so. ~~My~~ my bones, I know it will not be so. Yet, Thomas is RIGHT,

ND THEN, ~~WE~~ wrong. ~~WE~~ must keep on trying. I dont know why.

He added dryly:

"It is the best plan we can find and it might succeed," Phillip said quietly. "And, dear Matthew, I'll be there with this old hulk which I carry around, helping to turn the point of a spear."

Simon Peter stepped out of the recess and down into the street. ^{THEN WE} He will go to the Tomb, no", he said.

-SPACE-

AMONG THE BRANCHES OF THE ALMOND NOW.

He was up ^{AMONG} in the tree now and somewhere ^{BRANCHES} around him, the Legions had disposed themselves about the tomb. There was a quiet, deep as a pool. ~~and useless to plumb it. He could not find the depth of it.~~ They had him and he would have to stay there and watch them kill. Once he had stirred and instantly the hand of Demas had rubbed along the nape of his neck, softly, caressingly, but with something at the tip of the fingers which told him that the first sound from him would be the last ^{for some time.}

They had changed character with the approach of action and now there was no joking among them. He thought of his mother and Cousin Demmy and he even thought of Saul, longingly; longing for the darkness to open and let in the good light of day to wipe out the nightmare which had trapped him. But nothing came and he sat in a lower crotch ^{of the almond} with Demas perched above him. ^{WHO HAD A} Like a dark vulture ^{with a} talon fastened in his neck. Beneath ~~him~~, there was a scuffling and a whispering, ~~and he distinctly heard the shuffle of nothing.~~ ^{WARNINGLY.} Demas' ~~his~~ fingers tightened. John Mark strained his sight past his feet to the roof of the old tomb ^{some inches} below him. There were ^{shapes} moving down there, shapes that whispered and shuffled about, then the silence of the tomb closed in again. He knew what they were and the terror moved through his limbs until he was ~~flaccid~~ flacid with fear and a cold sweat pricked all over his skin.

Those shapes on the roof underneath must be the Temple police whom ^{the} Legion had said would ambush the Nazarene's men. ~~He had the will to~~ He could reach down with his toes and touch them. He felt everything slipping away inside him. His weight hung almost entirely from the ^{HANDS} ~~iron fingers~~ which held him.

It was the wheeze of old Phillip which told ~~him~~ when the Nazarene's men neared the tomb. ~~Then also~~ He had blinked away the ~~dark~~ ^{SWEAT WHICH FILMED} ~~dark~~ his eyes, ~~and~~ He could ^{MAKE THEM GO OUT} ~~see them~~ edging down the street. The Legions, in the trees, ^{WERE GHOSTS} ~~had become ghosts.~~ There was nothing alive up here, save Demas' fingers. He felt the fingers working around his neck until the thumb flattened itself behind his ear. ~~The fingers made a~~ ^{The fingers made a} suggestion of a twist.

One of these days when he grew up he would take DEMAS APART.

The narrow street made a right angled turn a few yards down so he only learnt of the approach of the Temple guards and their prisoner when the light from their torches stained the opposite wall. As the glow ^{arose,} ~~XXXX~~ he could, ^{from} ~~see-from~~ his vantage point in the tree above the roof, /the ambusher placed the ~~XXXX~~ Temple police had/~~set~~ on the roof, the Nazarene's disciples creeping forward, /unaware of the danger above them, and the elongated shadows of the approaching prisoner and escort reflected in the glow on the wall. The scene moved ~~around~~ ^{head} and round in his ~~mind~~ until he had it all sorted out. When the Nazarene's men got close enough, /the police on the roof would ~~leap~~ ^{drop} down on them and the ~~XXXX~~ swords of the police would ~~leap~~ ^{drop} through them all, Peter, old Philip, Johnny Thunder, all the men he had known. And he could see them ^{now,} trying to climb up the swords which had gone through their bodies, as he had seen the Temple police do in the alley when Ben's men had put the swords into them. Climb ^{ing} and climb ^{ing} the ~~swords,~~ ^{FELL BACK} hands clawing at the steel, until they ~~blubbered~~ and died. And then ~~when~~ ^{would} Ben Legion's men ~~dropped~~ ^{the police} down among ~~them,~~ ^{BUT} /after Peter and the others had died, ^{and} it would be the ~~tm~~ turn of the police to scream ^{and try} ~~and bubble~~ ^{TO CLIMB THE SWORDS.} ~~and die.~~ ^{JOHN MARK GAVE HIS HEAD A TIGHT SHAKE. SIMON PETER} ^{WOULD SAY, IF HE WERE HERE, "SPILL YOUR WIND, COX, SLOW DOWN."}

[The light of the torches increased as the escort neared, swelling closer along the wall, and he heard another sound which at first he could not identify until he listened some more and then knew it for the whistle of whips. The escort guards were whipping their prisoner. Whipping him. Whipping the Nazarene who could have been like King David, Warrior and King, had he not, unaccountably, changed his mind that morning on the hill outside Jerusalem. The Nazarene whom he had loved, fiercely, against Saul and the rest. And at whose side he had hoped to march when he entered the ~~hil~~ city as king. Now they would whip, and, in the morning, crucify. That was how it was done. He had heard it from the ^{Greek-Hebrew} ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ boy, Saul, the Roman-Jew Saul who boasted of citizenship with the conquerors; ^{Saul who,} ~~soon~~ soon Satan willing, already past his bar mitzvah, to be a full-fledged foul Pharisee. John Mark spat silently sideways for bad luck.

A movement on the roof beneath him caused him to crane a look. The Temple police ambushers were now off their knees, rising to a crouch. Ready to leap down on the Nazarene's men. The light on the wall was swelling rapidly. The escort could not be more than a few ~~steps~~ paces away. Soon the ~~escorts~~ ^{SWORDS} would ~~begin~~ ^{commence} the ~~murdering~~ ^{murdering}. Now, now. Now!

"NO! NO! NO!"

The scream was torn from ~~his~~ ^{HIM} throat. There was a shock-instant of absolutely no movement. Then the street erupted. Everything happened at once. John Mark never knew how he got ~~out~~ away from Demas Legion. But he was out of the tree, a wild leap to the roof, evading the struggling bodies, and off the roof into the street and ~~madly~~ ^{madly} running. Through ~~the~~ wild confusion. Roars ^R, bellows, yells.

Ben Legion's crazies ~~at~~ were first in the fray. ~~Howling like wolves,~~ ^{WITH WOLF HOWLS} they dropped from the trees to the roof, among the Temple police. The attack from such an unexpected quarter took the police completely by surprise; a surprise from which they never recovered for the Legions were already hard at work and they were wiped out to a man.

~~The~~ ^{Meanwhile, the} uproar on the roof, ~~from a~~ ^{from a} source unknown, flung the two parties on the ground, the Nazarene's disciples and the Temple escort, into confusion. Befuddled as they were, both utter ~~utter~~ / ~~both~~ groups thought they were being ambushed and sought escape rather than ~~any~~ ^{GROUP} resistance. Each ~~side~~ ^{side} took to its heels. The escort hustled their prisoner into a ~~side~~ ^{side} street; ~~the-disciples~~ Peter and his companions beat a hasty retreat. But ~~neither party~~ ^{NOBODY} ~~was~~ ^{Flew} faster than John Mark. ~~X~~

He flew as his feet hit the street. Like the wind he was, head down, elbows raking his ribs. Like a champion charioteer in the Circus in Rome, he showed clean heels to all.

Chapter

20

*Salomon built better things
than a long sweet long.*

A shepherd on the hill outside the city looked up and counted the hours by the wheel of the stars. ^{ONE FELL AND ~~HE~~ SHOWERED. HE MUTTERED A GOOD ~~THE~~ LUCK INCANTATION.} He reckoned it was three hours before daylight. He hunched down by the small fire again and busied his head with the Spring troubles of the flock.

- SPARE

John Mark

~~He~~/never knew nights were so long. Nights used to be a matter of falling asleep and waking up again. A matter of closing your eyes and opening them again. But this night was endless. As if there never would be another day. And ~~another thing~~, he was having trouble with his ~~eyes~~ eyelids.

No matter how he tried to keep them propped open, they kept falling down. He blinked them fast, but all that did was to get them ~~more~~ ^{wetter} and heavier and then, just when he wasn't watching, ~~they~~ they fell and stuck like glue. He stumbled into a ~~pothole~~ stoop and stubbed his toe and hopped about, wideawake with the pain.

The boy dropped to the pavement and caressed the aching toe. ~~He sucked in air through his teeth. He waited until the pains stopped shooting, and then he rose and went gingerly again. But the man had brought him wideawake.~~ ^{FOR TO} ^{ON} ^{STUBBED TOE} He looked cautiously about.

He was doubly a Quarry now. Not only ~~the spies were after him~~ ^{were the spies} ^{after him} but the Legions also. If any of the Legions lived, he was sure they would be after him for queering their game awhile ago. He hoped, roundly and strongly, that none of them lived. ~~He hoped it.~~ They knew every incut and loop of the city and they could surround him anytime, anytime at all. He must watch it like an eagle, like a ~~fox~~ ^{fox}, bending his eyesight around every corner, ^{SHOOTING} ~~sending~~ it ahead into every opening, Ready to whip about in a lightning change of direction or to plummet onward, swifter than the wind.

He breathed hard from the intensity of his thoughts. He rubbed the back of his neck and opened the collar of the cloak to let out some of the heat ~~gathered~~ gathered under it. He still didn't like this cloak. He looked down at it and hated it. He wondered who had his own blue cloak of fine linen, brother to the one his mother had made for the Nazarene? ^{TO} ~~He must~~ use worry ~~about that now. There were other things.~~ He must elude the Temple. ^{FOR} Tonight, ^{IN} in the morning there was Saul and the Wall. He had to be at

the Wall. ^{EVEN} ~~was~~ if they killed him afterwards. ^{HE HAD TO BE AT THE WALL.}

He shook his head ~~subtly~~ at the thought of killing, ~~and went on again.~~ He must find a way to ^{KEEP OFF} ~~be free of~~ such thoughts, ~~and go on his way.~~ He looked around and discovered he was in familiar territory again. He was in the street of Inns. He had an idea and walked on with his eyes searching, ~~the darkened street.~~ Presently, he found what he wanted.

There was a line of light issuing from a doorway further along the street. He went to it, cautiously. It was an ancient building and in daylight, its exterior would be unwelcoming. But, tonight, there was a light and inside, he knew, there would be warmth and company and a chance to hide from his pursuers. Cautiously, he shifted an edge of the ~~curtain~~ heavy goatskins / curtains.

He found what he expected. The company of pilgrims inside was poor but not so poor that they could not buy the cups of wine which entitled them to sit around the braziers and listen to the story-tellers. There were perhaps twenty or thirty squatting on the floor and some of the older men had their long noses buried in ~~orange-scented cushions~~ thick-skinned Syrian oranges and some of the women were bent over ^{THEIR SEWING,} ~~their work~~ needling at long tears ~~in garments,~~ acquired on the ^{ROAD.} ~~long trail.~~ And he could see how long a trail to Jerusalem some of them had taken, because there were the felt cloaks which were only worn by the shepherds in Turkey, and a scarlet tarbush from Egypt, and the loose, blue coat of some poor Greeks; and nobody who looked like a spy from the Temple.

Quietly, John Mark moved the curtain and slipped inside, head half-bent, eyes and mouth narrowed speculatively and edged over to the crowd.

He sat down beside an old woman who ate wheat cakes and ^{dried} ~~pieces of~~ meat ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~food~~ from a bowl on her knees, shaking the ~~gray~~ olive oil from the pieces of meat each time she took them up, and he tried to listen to the story teller and not let his eyes ^{STRAY} ~~go~~ to her fingers, nor let his tongue rove his lips as the scent of the food reminded him how hungry he was, until with a grunt she shifted the bowl from her knees, offering it to him. And he could not control the eagerness with which he reached for it.

The story teller was an apprentice; for his beard was young and scraggy and he tried to ~~bolster~~ bolster his story with big gestures that were too big for his story of a little Armenian girl and a sheep which ~~sang~~ sang; and almost everybody ~~was~~ was

eating or talking.

And John Mark could see that the innkeeper was becoming anxious — a big boned, dark faced man with malevolent eyes — lest the pilgrims become impatient and go to another inn. ^{And} after a quick look around, he ~~had~~ fixed the malevolent eyes on the master ~~of~~ of the story-telling troupe — a high shouldered man dressed like a Greek ~~man~~ with a heavy mane of hair and a magnificent beard and finely cut lips.

John Mark ate fast, his eyes darting quickly around the room, taking in everything and listening to the voices raised now so you couldn't hear the braziers sputtering or ^{HEAR} even the apprentice ^{STORY-TELLER WHO HAD BEGUN TO STUTTER.} ~~Then the woman~~ Then the woman ~~peered~~ peered into the bowl, grunted and removed it from his reach.

"Young heathen," the old woman muttered, peering at him from her beady black eyes, "young Jerusalem heathen. You stuff like a pig."

John Mark's face flushed with shame. Then he remembered his role and the nondescript cloak he wore and he dropped his eyes and recited like one of the beggar waifs of the streets: "My mother is dead, my father is dead, you are my mother and father."

"Like a pig," the old woman muttered again but the bowl came back within his reach. He ate on, slower this time, for he knew he had her, and looked with interest as the Greek beckoned his stuttering apprentice back into the troupe and himself rose to his feet and stepped into the centre of the circle, his hands outstretched and his eloquent eyes commanding silence.

"Hear ye that hath ~~ears~~ ears to hear," he spoke the formula as he walked to the centre, and the voices went down in deference to the master.

"A story that has never been told. A story of the ~~appearance~~ re-appearance on earth of Father Moses and the great prophet, Elijah."

Then there was a settling of bodies into comfort, a rapt silence in the room and some of the malevolence died out of the innkeeper's eyes. John Mark's jaws slowed and stopped, his eyes narrowed on the Greek ^{- HEBREW'S} face.

"Four men went up into a mountain, alone, to pray. And the dawn rose and evening fell for six days while they prayed. ~~And~~ And on the seventh day, while they prayed on this mountain, one of them was transfigured. His form was changed into that of an angel, his robes became white as snow, and the sun entered his face. And the three — "

John Mark rubbed his belly gently and grinned while the Greek talked. He was full and warm again and there were no spies about. And the Greek could tell it! Really, he could tell it! One would have imagined it had never been told before, ^{ed} if one had not heard it with one's own ears from ~~that father of lies~~ Simon Peter. But the Greek could not tell it like Simon Peter. He ~~wasn't~~ listen to the Greek.

" — and then a cloud descended on the mountain and from it, stepped Father Moses and the great prophet, Elijah and talked with the one who shone like the sun — "

The boy's clear laughter belled up in the room and ~~turned~~ all ~~their~~ heads ^{turned} to him.

"O Greek, you lie poorly," ^{laughed John Mark,} "for you could not have been there. No lazy Greek would climb a ~~mountain~~ mountain except —!"

The innkeeper's ~~big~~ wrathful bellow cut him off. ^{gleaming} The big boned man ~~his eyes~~ ^{eyes gleaming} was leaping towards him. John Mark ^{was appalled at what he had done. He} swept to his feet with a grunt of alarm. He whirled and dived for the door, burst through the skin curtain inches ^{ahead of} ~~before~~ the innkeeper and sprinted into the street. The oaths from the angry man followed him until he had outdistanced them.

He slowed to a walk, angry at himself. He had obtained shelter and food and had done himself out of them because of his ~~own~~ swift tongue. ^{AND MAYBE BECAUSE OF A FULL BELLY TOO.} He could have stayed there and ^{ENJOYED} ~~enjoyed~~ it if the Greek quietly ~~enjoyed~~ had not reminded him of another Greek, Saul, and made him make a fool of himself. He loosened the band at his waist for more comfort, thought some more, and shrugged. He had obtained a portion of what he had sought in the inn — food. Now he quite desperately wanted the rest of it, sleep. He did not doubt that he could do the Wall tomorrow, even without sleep; but he had heard ^{adult} ~~expected~~ observe that a man was stronger after a sound sleep; and he had to use his head if he wanted to beat Saul in the morning. So he would think it out as a big man and do what a big man would. But he must sleep somewhere near the Wall so he would have time to be awake and be there before daylight. The street of Inns had been promising, for it was quite near; but he had spoilt that one. He could not even take a chance on another inn for fear some pilgrim straying from the last, would come upon him in there and denounce him as an interferer. And then he had it and commenced walking faster. But his heart was in his mouth place of safety

For the ~~place of safety~~ he had thought of, was, the Wall.

CHAPTER 21

Phillip was thirsty. He would have liked a drink of water. But he had the bad idea that ~~the~~ ^{would} bitterness in his mouth ~~would~~ befoul the water. ~~But he had the bad idea~~ He looked around the dim chair court. So this was the ugly end, he thought. *The broken sobs from ^{Simon} Peter.*

He thought how like whipped ~~dogs~~ ^{dogs} they had slunk back to kennel, and, like ~~dogs~~ ^{dogs}, they whined. He was unsparing ~~of all, including himself.~~ ^{of all, including himself.} He heard John moan again and he closed his fist.

Phillip ~~had~~ ^{had} only just returned to the ~~chair~~ court. He had been unable to run as fast as the others when the alarm came, and he had heard the strange sounds of battle on the roof of the tomb. He had just learnt from Matthew, the meaning of the sounds.

"The trap was set for us," Matthew whispered. "Lucky for us the Legions had their own ideas. They wiped out the police."

"But why should they save us?"
told him

"They didn't," Matthew ~~said~~ ^{grimly}. "That was young John Mark. From what Ben Legion very courteously told me — he waylaid me while I took my roundabout course to get here — they wouldn't have minded had the police first wiped us out."

Phillip allowed the silence to run through his mind. Then he drew a deep breath which hurt his chest and said at last: "Tell me about — ~~the~~ ^{the Master.}"

He felt Matthew stir and he reached out and touched his ~~arm~~ ^{shoulder.}

"We — we went ~~there~~ there — to Caiaphas' palace. I don't know why. They had him in the courtyard of the ~~palace~~ palace. More than a score of them were there — police and soldiers, Roman soldiers. One of their centurions, named Guiseppe — he is their crucifier — he was — hitting him. Simon got in among the servants. I believe he must have made some protest, because one of the servants said he was a friend of the prisoner."

He stopped and Philip said gently, insistently, "Yes?"

"Simon denied it," Matthew said rapidly.

"Everything, Matthew," gently, insisting.

Matthew nodded. He spoke quietly.

"Simon denied it. Swore it was not so. Swore that he had

never been with us. Never been with the Master. He was shouting, you know. The Master heard and turned and looked at him."

"That's all he did?"

"That's all he did. Just looked at him. But, Philip, it was enough. We — we — we went away. Left him."

Philip groaned. He said, "Matthew, are we the best apostles he could find in all ~~Judea~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Judea?"

~~— SPACE —~~
Simon Peter was inconsolable. Philip had tried. They were sorry he did it ~~was~~ was where they could all hear him. Philip turned his head towards

• Every inch of the way, Matthew. What did you stumble upon, my foxy friend?

"Yes, Matthew. Continue."

"There he was, writing and rubbing out, writing and rubbing out everytime with a brush of his hand. The same figure in the dust, everytime. Then ~~he left it~~ one time he left it there and turned full to me. There were his eyes, burning out of two holes in that brown face of his. Like coals at the bottom of a stove."

In the dark, he

Matthew paused. ~~He~~ stroked his uncombed beard with the back of one hand. Phillip

waited silently. *MATTHEW CONTINUED SOFTLY.*

~~Matthew said softly~~ "Aye, Phil. The eyes burning into me with a light I have never seen --- save in the Master's. He whispered hoarsely at me, shaking with excitement as a Bedouin who has turned up a cache of nuggets, ~~the kingdom of heaven is here!~~ 'The Kingdom of Heaven is here! Here! The Second Coming --- its here already! Here is the chariot in which comes the Christ of whom ~~our~~ our fathers spoke!' And he pointed me at what he had written in the dust and only then did I recognize it."

Philip grunted. "What was ~~XXX~~ it?"

"A cross," Matthew said tonelessly. "The ~~horrible~~ ^{horrible} Roman altar on which our conquerors sometimes place their well beloved citizens of the second class. ~~That~~ That was the chariot his poor dark mind had fashioned for the Master."

---SPACE---

Philip recalled another journey. He could have told poor, puzzled Matthew why it was not peculiar that such a revelation should come from John. He could tell Matthew how John's mind had a way of pushing out into the deep, ~~and hook~~ ^{and hook} into some boundless truth, some incredible insight, and bring it into familiar waters. A very gifted fisherman. Fisher of man.

Philip recalled the journey.

(111-8)

It happened at Bethany. They had left Cana in the early spring, soon as the roads were fit to travel, walking in the cool of the ~~day~~ days.

Sometimes they fell in with caravans of merchants or pilgrims, sometimes ~~along~~ ^{TRAILS} along little used ~~trails~~ scratched in forbidding sand fastnesses, but safe enough from the robber bands which skulked away between the rocks at the approach of the brawny Simon Peter, and the brothers James and John, and the other oar-strengthened giants of Galilee. And the Master had been so full of life and vigour. Ever talking. Ever explaining. Ever illustrating from the ~~great~~ great ~~FUND~~ of stories in his head. He could hear him now as if it had been yesterday:

"Listen! A sower went out to sow!"

And you heard the wild music of the words, like the wind in the trees, ^{like} the sea among the rocks ~~at~~ at Galilee.

Hunkered down in the dark court of Jerusalem this evil night, listening to the ~~unsettling~~ ^{unsettling} sobs from the ~~Simon Peter~~ Simon Peter, Philip turned his mind to the ~~sunlit~~ sunlit days ~~that~~ of their ~~pilgrimages~~ pilgrimages, the high lark's singing, and the voice of the Nazarene ringing from hilltop to hollow, ^{as they marched,} teaching them the new thing. And brown cakes turning in hot ashes in the velvet evenings, the sudden flood of wellbeing when sandals were taken off, the quiet voice of the Master telling them of the power within, teaching them the new way to God that required no money ^{for buying} ~~rams~~ ^{SACRIFICIAL} rams, or goats or doves. ^{Free. Without price. Simply go} ~~within~~ ^{WITHIN. I am. I am.} ^{Walking,} And on and on they had gone. ~~particular~~ ^{particular} which he now

recalled, through Nazareth and Nain and Bethabara, through Sychar and the cities of ~~Samaria~~ ^Samaria, past Lydda and Bethel and Jericho, preaching and healing through the territory of Galilee, until, ~~as~~ as homing pigeons, they had turned their faces to the white roofs of Jerusalem. But at his beloved Bethany, the Nazarene had paused. And there within a ~~stone's~~ stone's throw of the Temple, he had yielded up himself to the priests. [He had recalled a dead man from the ~~tomb~~ tomb. ^{TO THE PRIESTS} And so given the ultimate, most dangerous account of himself as an enemy of the Temple.

~~Lazarus~~ ^{Lazarus}

^{And} in those terrible moments before the tomb, when they wheeled wildly between terror and insanity, Philip had heard John cry the great truth.

"He is God in the Flesh, come down to us!"

His eyes closed, and face queerly gaunt, John had made the whispered cry through clenched teeth, as in a fit, the encompassing fact, loud in Philip's ear as a thunderclap. And with blanched cheeks, Philip had stumbled away, fumbling blindly before him until he found a tree and sank at its roots.

Remembering how John had mumbled on, caught up in his
trance, unable to stop, his eyes burning, his body shaking.

111 D

BACKSPACE-

Phillip wrapped his arms about his knees, pushed the sounds of the court

BACKSPACE-

Phillip wrapped his arms about his knees, pushed the sounds of the court from his mind and gave himself over to thought. If God was Spirit, as the Nazarene had taught them, life, as he called it, then Spirit had entered into them at birth. They had been born with it. It lighteth every man that cometh into this world, John had whispered that morning outside Lazarus' tomb. But if a second coming, a borning again, as the Nazarene had termed it, was necessary for obtaining the kingdom, then the Nazarene must die so his spirit could live in them. God BECOME became flesh, to dwell among us, John had said. And flesh died.

The Nazarene had said at ~~the~~ Chinnereth that he was the lamb for sacrifice, the expedient victim, the shepherd who died for his sheep. He would die, so The Word, as John had called it, could be born again in them.

→ IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD. [JOHN HAD WHISPERED THE ABSOLUTE,
~~THEY HAD WHISPERED THE ABSOLUTE~~
— SPACE —

"I don't get the principle of it," Matthew said worriedly. "A cross. Why? I wouldn't ask the others. They're young. But you'll understand, Phil. Why? Why the cross? **THAT JOHN BROODS SO!**"

"You're a young man too, Matt, ~~and~~^{and} night is a bad time to worry," Phillip said gently. "Everything looks black. Wait until the sun comes up."

"Will it ever ^{BE} ~~be~~ ^{The same} again? Isn't this a night like no other night?"

Phillip waited a long time before he spoke. The Nazarene had once

FACE STIFF AS A GOURD,
HIS ~~FACE~~ ~~WAS~~ ~~STARE~~ EYES,
~~WAS~~ UNSEEING, CLUTCHING
HIS WALKING STAFF SO TIGHTLY
~~WAS~~ HIS KNUCKLES ~~WAS~~ ~~WAS~~
SHONE WHITE.

warned them against telling their thoughts too freely. Do not cast your pearls before swine, he had said, instantly presenting a word-picture ~~before~~ their eyes in the way only he could.

But he must tell it to Matthew. Soon they would all be scattered to the four winds. He had no doubt of ~~that~~ it. The Temple would see that they were hounded out of Jerusalem. And Matthew would be travelling alone. Matthew would want to travel with him, but, priests or no priests, he did not see himself taking to the roads with a chest ready to cave in at any ~~moment~~. He would stay in Jerusalem. But because ^{POOR} Matthew seemed so unsure, his old trade as Herod's tax collector ^{BEING} a constant in the ~~temple~~ ^{ABUSE} sometimes hurled at him, he would victual Matthew for his lonesome road in whatever way he could.

"That is downright stupid, Matthew," he said sharply. "Grieving for a Master is understandable. I expect that even crusty old Gamaliel will have disciples grieving for him when he goes. But in our case, there is a ^{difference} ~~hard~~. ^{hard} "You were ready ~~to collapse~~ with the rest of us awhile ago," Matthew said ^{hard}.

"Then more stupid me," snapped Philip. "You asked me earlier about the kingdom of the spirit. I said I was not sure if I knew. I will tell you what I do know. I know that there is a spirit in every man. A spirit of fulfilment which has to be fulfilled. As a musician or a cobbler, as a priest of Jehovah or a cleaner of stables. And this individual spirit of accomplishment, is ~~the~~ God, within us."

"How do you get to that?" Matthew demanded.

"The Master told us this, remember? ~~The~~ God is in the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of heaven is within us. Remember? The Master taught us this. ~~When~~ When we manifest these accomplishments, the kingdom has come to us. His will is being done on earth as it ^{being} ~~done~~ done in heaven. But we need the bread of faith to believe this is so. To believe in ourselves. And we need it daily, ~~every~~ each hour."

And I could go on and tell you, friend Matthew, that only when we sanctify ourselves will this faith be abundant. Sanctify ourselves, as the Master declared he had done, ^{at Passover} in the upper room of our little friend's house. And we cannot sanctify ourselves, make ourselves holy and clean and pure as the lamb when it is prayed over by the priests before the sacrifice, we cannot do so, until we have learnt how to forgive. ~~THE SPIRIT~~ The spirit flourishes only when we forgive. Where there is no forgiveness, the spirit is choked and there is no access to God.

Philip went back on his heels and tried to squeeze some air into his tired old chest. It was the final miracle. ~~That old fisherman~~ Philip the Poor Fisherman had become Philip the ~~Preacher~~ ^{ROMAN} Preacher. He smiled a little sadly at his joke. He did not think he would make a good priest. He needed gentling. With a little flurry of its own, his mind went back to a few days ago when he had watched the Nazarene gentle the bucking, unbroken colt they had liberated from the ^{city of JERUSALEM} ~~city~~ as the fiercely patriotic Judas had grimly joked. He remembered how the frightened beast had been gentled after the Master sat on its back. Spoken ^{quietly} to the trembling animal. And then, not so much as a toss of the head at the people crowding around. Not so much as swishing a tail at the wild shouting and the branches waved in its

face as it bore him whom they believed to be the incoming king of the Jews. And he remembered the ~~thought~~ thought that had flashed in his mind. So would he gentle all your wild, s/purious spirits.

"Isn't that the ~~prayer~~ prayer he ~~taught~~ taught us that morning on the mountain?"

Philip jerked up his head. He had quite forgotten Matthew. He caught up the thread of ^{the LOST} conversation, ~~that was lost~~.

"That is it," he said wearily. "That is why he has to die. To convince us

PERHAPS

that the spirit is greater than the grave. He will suffer, ~~uncomplainingly~~ ^{PERHAPS NOT. AND THEN HE WILL DIE.} uncomplainingly ~~and die when he wills it.~~

"You sound a little like John. Much like John," Matthew said. ^{Except that John would say he will not die.}

"He will show us how to be sons of God and be sons of man. You will see tomorrow."

"It will take a great deal to make it ~~rari~~ rational."

"Not when you have seen it, Matthew. We have seen him as son of God. The miracles. The unbelievable miracles. We have seen them all, ^{He has fed us, clothed us out of the air.} with our own eyes. There is now the other side ~~to~~ to see. Then it will be rational."

"Well, there will be pain, sure enough." They were suddenly talking calmly. A sudden need to deny calamity. "The pain will force him to ~~acknowledge it.~~ ^{Then, you say,} ~~being a son of God will not make him less a son of man.~~ Blood and pain is still a part of our mortality." Matthew paused. He said, "But why do we require this? Have not we seen him weep and laugh and in anger as any one of us? ^{We know he is a son of man. He has said so too. Son of God and son of man!}

Philip ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ was absorbed. There was much for which he was still searching and maybe Herod's old tax collector had it somewhere in his bag.

"We are poor wheat, hard to grow," old Philip said. His ^{fellow} townsman, Simon Peter, was ^a blunt ^{fellow.} Philip liked to think he was subtle. Between them, the two Bethsaida ^{fellows} ~~representatives~~ ought to ^{be able to} keep this mixed bunch together. ^{admitted to himself} Somehow. Philip ~~admitted to himself~~ ~~admitted~~ that he was sometimes very trying. He liked to ask questions, the answers ^s to which he already knew. But that way, he ^{reckoned he} strengthened his own ^{knowledge and} ~~belief~~ belief. "Wheat of the first day, instant feed for the wild sparrows, ^{friend Matthew!}

"And the Rabbi is wheat of the third day?" Matthew asked.

Jehovah-jireh! Aye, the sharp tax collector.

"It is a powerful thought, Matthew. It could be the answer. The Master did speak more than once about what would happen on the third day." Matthew looked slyly sideways at Philip. "Will you wait to see whether the wheat springs, old man?" Philip breathed heavily. There.

"I am for waiting," ~~he~~ ^{he} said ^{firmly.}

Long after he thought it was ended, Philip heard the sound. ^{It is alright with me, friend Matthew. Many in Israel are weeping ^{you, John, Simon, me, many,} tonight.}

He did not move to comfort the man. Matthew would not want him ^{to}. He said, "Do you think they will catch the boy?"

Matthew rasped his throat. "Poor young devil. He hasn't a chance."

"It is always pitiful when one so young has to die."

"His mother is a good woman."

"God be merciful to her."

"Aye."

Matthew said after a silence: "I cannot remember all the words. Someone should have written them down. Do you remember?"

Philip said, "Remember? What words?"

"The prayer he taught us. The prayer of the ~~Lord~~ Master. Remind me of them and I will write them down when we get out of this."

Philip shook his head. It was strange that while he could remember, ^{who} there was so much he did not understand. But the tax collector/could not remember seemed ready to understand. To believe is to understand, Philip thought. When you believed, you understood even if you were unaware that you did. It was like knowing without knowing. Like knowing when you came to the best water for a particular fish. And if that was fisherman's philosophy, well, he was from Bethsaida. "I will give you my recollection." Matthew sat very still, his retentive mind absorbedly on Philip. *like this:* ~~It goes~~ "Our Father in the heavens, your name must be ~~hallowed~~ being hallowed. Your kingdom must be being restored. Your will must be being done both in heaven and upon the earth. Give us ~~bread~~ today, our bread for the morrow. And forgive us our faults as we forgive those offending us. For you would not lead us into temptation but deliver us from its evil." That, dear Matthew, is as much as I remember." approved.

Someone was breathing deeply in sleep. Philip ~~needed~~ Sleep ~~would~~ *SEE BACK* ~~would~~ be good for him too. He was weary. They were all weary. *weary* ~~Take~~ *Take* "Come unto me all ye ~~weary~~ ~~and~~ ~~I~~ ~~will~~ ~~give~~ ~~you~~ ~~rest~~." He tried to remember where they ~~were~~ *were* when the Nazarene had spoken those words. ~~It~~ It was in one of the towns near to his own Capernaum. ~~He~~ He had liked going to ~~the~~ the Master's house *at Capernaum.* Seeing him sit at his own table. Strange it was, then, after having known him only in the nomadic life ~~when they were~~ on the road. He ~~was~~ *once* was wryly amused at a story Matthew had told him. It was soon after ~~the~~ the great concourse on Olivet ~~when~~ *once* when Jesus ~~delivered~~ ~~the~~ ~~word~~ what they now knew to be ~~the~~ the definitive word on his mission. *they were in Capernaum* Matthew said that soon after they came down from the mountain, ~~when~~ ~~a~~ ~~lawyer~~ ~~came~~ ~~forward~~ ~~offering~~ ~~his~~ ~~services~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~campaign~~ ~~.~~ **** No doubt*

*** So weary. ~~John~~ Isethsamane. John's story about Isethsamane last night. After the arrest.

~~"He was praying"~~
"I heard him praying in the garden. Before the soldiers came," John had said.

Philip ~~had~~ had given him a dubious eye.

"Yes?"

"I have never heard him pray like that before."

"Yes?"

"He was very tense. He seemed uncertain. Not like before."

"I thought you said you and Peter and your brother ~~John~~ were asleep."

"Yes. But before I fell asleep. I have never heard him so uncertain."

"Oh, go to. You were all half-asleep. We were all weary." ~~John~~

"True, old man. But I heard him. He was uncertain."

~~"We were all weary."~~

"We were all weary."

travel, no doubt
expecting

He said he would go anywhere the Master chose to /~~XXXX~~ expecting there would be rich pickings when the Master came into his kingdom. But the Nazarene, with that piercing look, said to the unlucky ~~XXXXXXXX~~ shelumiel, "Foxes have holes, the birds their roosts, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

Philip remembered how he had chuckled at Matthew's story but had commented that the ~~Xxx~~ Rabbi was not wholly truthful, considering he had his comfortable home in Capernaum. And Matthew had turned that sly face on him and said, "You a shelumiel too, Philip? The Rabbi was aiming his words at the luckless lawyer. Even the thieving old fox has a hole it calls its home, the ~~free~~ free-flying bird ^{has a roost it calls its home,} ~~but that lawyer, that swindler son of man~~ swindlers son of man, was so busy hunting for ~~easy~~ easy marks he ~~had no time for~~ had no time for a home."

But ~~Matthew~~ Matthew was not in this story-telling mood tonight. Now as he spoke, the ^{HE HAD BEEN} ~~story~~ was in his voice.

"Couldn't ~~he~~ ^{HE HAD BEEN} stopped?"

"Who?"

"Judas!" [Philip recalled the ^{scene} ~~story~~ at Passover table. Jesus had known, when Judas ~~had~~ left the table. The disciples had thought he was gone to buy food for next day when the shops would be closed.

"The Master knew. He ~~did~~ ^{did} not ~~stop~~ ^{stop} him."

"I mean us, man! One of ^{could} ~~us~~ ^{could} have stopped him!"

"Can the fish ~~straighten~~ ^{straighten} the big hook?"

Matthew and the others. Philip said to himself that he was not the quickest man to understand. Not like ^{Matthew and the others} Sometimes he kept asking questions long after others had turned away. But once he understood, he never forgot. "Can the fish ~~straighten~~ ^{straighten} the hook? The last hook, the big one, at the end of the troll? ~~And even if he does~~ Can he straighten every hook in the ~~sea~~ ^{sea} if he is destined to be food for the world?"

She ~~could~~ ^{knew} from the look on Nicodemus' face, that ~~she~~

Nicodemus shook his head slowly at her as he came in and she knew ~~they had not found him~~. ^{JOHN. He was very tired. His feet and sandals were dusty} ~~She knew Demmy had done his best. He knew how much~~ ^{usually immaculate robes} ~~she loved her son~~ ^{dishevelled}. He must have scoured the city. ~~His face stiff and~~ ^{she hid it in her hands}. He stood awkwardly. ~~Poor Demmy. Poor Demmy.~~

"He has not been picked up by the Temple, ~~XXXXX~~ We are sure. My men have been into Annas' and Caiaphas'. ~~He is safe, XXXX XXXX XXXX~~ ^{He is safe} wherever he is."

Her mind opened on the word. Safe? And the soldiers after him? She caught her breath. Dear God! Demmy does not know that the soldiers are after ^{my son} ~~him~~ too. And ^{JOHN} ~~him~~ might see Janus on the street, or his man, Quartus, and run headlong into them for he would believe he was safe with them. Dear God!

3000 = 6000 further.
1/2 3000

all he and
like to do
12,000.
will spend about
\$1000. includes
pumpkin, & more.

She caught her breath. Dear God -- he will not know that the soldiers are after him, ~~for he might see Janus on the street, or his man, Quartus, and run headlong into them for he would believe he would be safe with them.~~ Dear God!

"Mary -- Mary, you are hurting yourself needlessly, ~~stop staring at nothing!~~ lad I tell you the ~~lad~~ lad will be alright!"

When she spoke, it ~~came~~ was in a whisper. ~~Demmy~~ "Demmy, the soldiers are seeking him too! Janus is seeking him for the Temple! He will find him and deliver him to Annas!"

He looked at her oddly. "Come, Mary, you are beside yourself. Here, lie down and rest, my dear. I promise you I will have John here before morning."

She clutched his hand. "No no no Demmy, I am not mad! I tell you Janus will deliver him to the Temple! He told me so!"

"Pull yourself together," ~~Necessarius said sharply.~~ NONSENSE! "You are talking ~~wildly~~ wildly."

She stared ~~wildly~~ WILDLY at him. Then, gradually, her eyes quieted and she ~~stepped away~~ walked to the couch and sat down. She waited until she was sure he would believe in her composure ~~had~~ UNDERSTAND THAT HER returned. HAD

Then she told him. He believed her, ~~that~~

"But -- Janus! It is incredible!"

"Remember you told me he was Rome," she said stonily. "It is not incredible."

PICKED UP HIS AND BEGAN TO PUT IT ON. He reached swiftly for the cloak ~~he had discarded when he entered the room.~~

"Then we must find him before they do," he said grimly. "My God, I never knew this city was such a rat's nest -- there are more holes in it than in a robe BEGGAR'S ~~discarded by a~~ INTO But we will go up every one of them. My men know them all --"

"Demmy," she interrupted him, "I have an idea."

He straightened and faced her, shrugging on the cloak. ~~He fumbled at the cloak.~~ CATCH, impatient ~~at the~~ at the delay.

"Speaking of rat's nest, there is a band of - gentlemen from whom not even the clever John could long hide. Let us get them to help us find him."

"Who are they?" he asked quickly.

"I don't know, really -- but you've heard of them. They call themselves Legion. I --"

"Wait a minute!" Demmy said sharply, ~~interrupting her.~~ "Funny you should have mentioned them. I was stopped by their band on my way here. I know them fairly well. Funny thing is - funny now that I think of it, they seemed to know that I was looking for John. Yes -- they knew! For they made some crazy joke -- you know the story of Saul and David. They said -- wait, I have it: Saul has slain his thousands. so John must ~~be~~ slay

his ten thousands.' "

She felt excited. There ^{could be} a clue in whatever they had said. Her mind hurried backward to her first ~~encounter~~ encounter with the Legions when, out of their seemingly crazy talk, Matthew had pieced something together. Her mind came swiftly forward again to the present. At last, here was something to do for her son, rather than just standing aside and letting Demmy try it alone.

Nicodemus was turning to go. "Anyway, I will keep my eyes opened for them," he said.

"No, Demmy — dont go yet!" ~~she cried to him.~~

He frowned. She swallowed and shook her head a little, smiled tentatively at him. He wanted to ^{TAKE IN HIS ARMS.} ~~hold~~ her. He frowned some more.

"Now, tell it to me again, Demmy, slowly this time."

He ^{GLOWERED AT HER.} ~~glowered~~ at her. "No wonder the Capernaum aunts have no use for you. You must have read very little, if any, about ^{KING} Saul and David not to ^{REMEMBER THE STORY.} ~~be able to quite easily~~." ^{king}

She listened while he told her, her head on one side, repeating the words soundlessly.

"Saul has slain, but John must — Saul - Saul — O, Demmy —!" she ^{WAS ON} ~~was on~~ her feet, her eyes wide, ~~on his face~~ " — Demmy — Saul is his best friend — or worse enemy — I have never been sure which!"

Nicodemus looked puzzled. ^{"Saul?"} ~~he wondered that~~

She laughed suddenly, joyously. ^{GAMALIEL} ~~All we have to do is to think of something which~~ ^{"Yes - Saul! A young GREEK WHO STUDIES WITH A} Saul has done and which my Johnny thinks should be outdone — do you see? Wherever that leads us, there we will find him!"

"Amen," Demmy said ~~wearily~~ wearily. "Now — what?"

Mary gave a tiny shriek and grabbed ~~the~~ two firm fistfuls of his cloak.

"Demmy — he's gone to the Wall!"

Nicodemus fingered his ear, a wry smile regarding her. "Very clear — ^{DAMASCUS} ~~as~~ mud," he told her. ^{about the wall.} ~~["The Wall," she said. "SAUL DID THE WALL"]~~

~~last~~ last Passover and said my Johnny could never do it — it has haunted him all year — talked of nothing else! I am sure that's where he is!"

Demmy said with weary patience. "Suppose we make it clear, my dear."

She told him ^{about the wall.} ~~what John would do~~. Then her voice trailed off when she saw the horror in his eyes.

"Mary —!" he said hoarsely, "they have doubled the watch on the walls!"

He awoke in the awareness that he must have slept. He had never slept on top of a wall before. When he awoke, at first, he had thought he was still asleep and that he was dreaming. He was dreaming that those stars above him, floating in the inky black, were not stars at all, but the jewels in the ~~black~~ hats of a million high priests hovering over him with their knives. Whetted and poised, ^{ARGUING} ~~discussing~~ where they would commence ^{ON JOHN MARK.} ~~to cut.~~ It took him a little time to understand that the stone underneath him was not an altar-stone, but the top of the wall. He recognised the sound of the sentry's feet, ^{TRAMPING OVERHEAD.} ~~He came~~ ^{HE} ~~Marching by his head, and then he was~~ fully awake, ~~and knowing that he must be absolutely~~ ~~quiet.~~ He drew in his feet carefully, ~~and~~ sat up.

He was on a shelf ^{OF} the wall just below ^{THE} a rampart. Inches above his head, a sentry paced. He had made it. He licked his lips and tried a weak grin. He thought of Saul and the grin grew stronger. He had made it. He twisted his head for a glimpse down into the courtyard ^{OUT OF} ~~from~~ which he had climbed to the wall. He nearly fell.

John Mark ~~grasped~~ ^{HIMSELF BACKWARDS,} and flung ~~back~~ ^{DUG} hugging ~~his arms~~ ~~about~~ ~~him~~ an angle of the wall, ~~digging~~ ^{into} his fingers into the rough ~~finished~~ ~~mortar~~ ~~and~~ ~~building~~ ~~his nose~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~void~~. He was frightened. He had looked down into ~~a~~ ~~void~~ of sixty feet ^{NOTHING,} of empty air through which, one ~~slight~~ slip, and he would be falling. One ^{SMALL} ~~slight~~ slip, or if the sentry choose to lean over and give him a ^{SMALL} ~~slight~~ push.

He held the rough mortar, sick and shaking, ~~the back of his neck~~ ~~aching~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~tenseness~~ ~~that~~ ~~was~~ ~~making~~ ~~him~~ ~~giddy~~. His fingers would ~~never~~ ^{WHAT WAS HE DOING,} ~~never~~ ever leave the mortar. They would take roots and grow into it. He was sure that never as long as he lived would his head be ever able to turn. ~~He could not~~ ^{up here?} ~~he~~ ~~up~~ ~~here~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~.

He had come into the courtyard, cautiously, but feeling good, ^{FOR THERE WAS} ~~and looking at~~ the wall. ^{STANDING} ^{HE WAS READY FOR IT.} like a challenge, ~~and~~ ~~came~~ ^{THE} coast was clear. He had not hesitated, ~~at~~ ~~all~~. Step by step, his bare feet sure on the well rubbed stones, he had mounted the stairs. He was smart. ^{HE} ~~and he~~ ~~had~~ paced his climb to the marches and the wheelings of the sentry, employing all the dodges he had learnt ^{IN THE} ~~at~~ night from Ben and the Legions. Then when he reached the shelf, he had crawled out to it, stretched at full length, wrapped the cloak about him, grinned — and had promptly fallen asleep from exhaustion and a filled ^{STOMACH.} ~~belly~~. Now here he was awake again, but trembling like a leaf. ^{FROM} ~~From~~ fear. When morning came, they would find him pinned to the wall and trembling like a leaf. Saul would find him, ~~there~~.

SAUL ALWAYS FOUND HIM.

So then he remembered Saul and he ^{FOUGHT} ~~lost~~ his fingers. ~~He spoke to his~~ ^{on the rough mortar} fingers, ~~in his mind,~~ fought them until, reluctantly, the ~~lips~~ ^{lips} eased their grip, and ~~rested~~. His arms slid back. He licked his lips and sat away from the wall, ~~so it no longer~~ ^{it had} bruised his chest. ^{SORE.} He shut his eyes tightly, turned his head slowly, opened them and looked down into the well below, ~~where again~~. Nothing happened. He gulped and swallowed. He drew in ^{a deep} breath ~~again~~ and looked around him. ^{NOW AND AGAIN HE LOOKED DOWN, BUT} ~~his fear~~ ^{fled.} He wasn't sure if the stars were paling. If he closed his eyes and opened them suddenly, they seemed to have paled. Then when he looked longer, he wasn't sure if they had. It was a puzzle that would trouble him if he kept at it. He wouldn't keep at it.

He knew the ramparts on top of the Joppa wall as he knew the palm of his hand. When the time came and he sprang up, he would know where to ^{GO.} ~~leap~~. The only worry he had was the ^{COIL} ~~risk~~ of pain that went round and round at the bottom of his belly and made his legs slack and tired ~~when he~~ ^{everytime they} remembered that soon ~~he would be depending on~~ ^{he would be depending on} them. But ~~it~~ ^{THIS} had always happened just before the sprint races. And had he ever fallen down in any of the sprint races? ^{SET UP THE SPILL AND EVEN THEN HE HAD GOT UP AND WON.} Except that time when Saul had ~~arranged with the other boys~~ ^{HE} pushed out his mouth and shook his head stubbornly. ~~He had never fallen down.~~

John Mark ~~passed~~ slipped his hands inside his pocket and searched around and found nothing. He wished he had some dried dates. He liked to lay down and munch on dried dates. Judas had always carried dried dates and figs in his bag for when the band had nothing else to eat. ^{THE TIMES} ~~He should~~

He should not be thinking about Judas.

Or about any of them. Or about the sounds of the whip when the Temple police had neared the Tomb. ~~He should not be hearing the sounds of the whip. He would not. He would not even think.~~ [↓] He would lay down there and not think. Not even about his mother.

And it was not true that he had her in his ^{EYES AND} nostrils now, nor ~~the~~ the touch of her fingers ^{IN HIS HAIR,} ~~up and down his temples,~~ nor the ^{SOUND} ~~voice~~ of her laughter swelling inside him. ~~He~~ ^{AGAIN} He fell asleep thinking of his mother.

— SPACE —
And if the moment came when she knew the worse, her mind would go. ^{Mary} ~~She~~ knew that with ^{desperate} ~~growing~~ clarity.

~~shaking~~ All else was dark, or whirled. She stumbled on the arm of Nicodemus and she was numb and ~~shaking~~ shaky all ~~over~~ at the same time.

He held her until she was steadier on her feet, ~~and~~ His eyes darkened, ~~in a flash~~.

"Mary, Mary, my dear," he said low voiced. "Let me take you back to the house. My men and I will be better able to search ~~for him~~ ^{when you are} safely at ~~the house~~ ^{home."} ~~there was feeling in her again.~~ She let go of his arm and bit her lips until ~~she was shaking~~ She shook her head.

~~"No, no, Demmy. He will come to me if he hears me calling him."~~ ^{WONT COME TO ANYONE BUT ME, HE WILL} ~~He had not handled it right. She should not have left the house at all. His legal mind, ~~as a result of~~ and ~~logic~~ ^{HE SHOULD} ~~somewhere else. This could not be~~ guiding a distraught woman through the streets of Jerusalem in the hour before dawn, ~~and~~ knowing her very presence was a danger to ~~the~~ what ~~he~~ he had to untangle.~~

He ~~looked~~ ^{looked} about impatiently, trying ^{with his eyes} to pierce the pre-dawn gloom ~~with~~ ^{his eyes}. His men had gone up ahead; when he halted, were perhaps muttering ~~among~~ between the four of them at ~~the~~ ^{the} surprising stupidity of their master. By some stroke of luck, perhaps because they had been keeping on the edge of the city, following the city wall, they had not encountered any of the ~~patrols~~ ^{house} patrols. This was the third gate they had reached since they had left the ~~city~~ and the same thing was about to happen as had happened at the others.

There was a light in the guardhouse over the arch of the gate and they could hear the ~~beat of the sentry's~~ ^{OF THE SENTRY.} footsteps ~~in the~~ ^{in the} guardhouse, perhaps dicing ~~the~~ away the remaining portion of their watch. With ~~a resigned~~ ^{a resigned} ~~shrug of~~ ^{shrug of} ~~his~~ ^{Nicodemus} to his shoulder, ~~he~~ told himself he would know soon enough. ["ALRIGHT," ~~he said to~~ ^{he said to} ~~Mary.~~ ^{Mary.}]

Her clear tone, without a trace of anxiety, floated out:

"John? John, ~~my~~ dear? Are you up there?"

There was a silent pause, then a distant ~~beat~~ ^{clatter} of the sentry's footsteps ~~on~~ ^{on} the ~~rampart~~ ^{rampart}. Nicodemus waited grimly. The steady call came again.

"John? It's ~~me~~ I, dear, come down. Can you hear me?"

Now they will come, Nicodemus thought bleakly. Pigs out of the pig-sty.

A surprised but delighted howl came from the guardhouse and a heavier rush of feet

as the guard tumbled out and scrambled for the parapet. They ~~leaped over, the parapet and~~ ^{peered down} looked down.

"The boy is not here, Mary!" Nicodemus said, furious because he knew she would not heed him. "Let's go on!"

"John? John, dear? Come down, John — can you hear me?"

~~The rush of laughter descended on them.~~ ^[HOOTS and CATCALLS SHOWERED] A gravelly voice came out of it, in hoarse imitation of Mary's.

"I can't come down, dear — ^{WILL} you come up?"

~~E "HE IS NOT HERE, MARY,"~~ ^{said angrily.} Nicodemus ~~replied.~~ "They'll make a fool of you!"

Mary clenched her fists and dug them at her ears to keep out the ~~boisterous~~ laughter. Her voice rose.

"John — listen to me, John — you must come home now, do you hear? The game is off, John!"

"You come up, dear and the game will be on —!"

^{DERISION FELL} The ~~men~~ in a ~~dark~~ flood. The men on the parapet ~~peered~~ and yowled. ^{YELLED} THE BORING WATCH WAS RECEIVING A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED GIFT. BUT WHAT HAPPENED ~~and some limited stallions and called things down at her.~~ ^{YELLING} NEXT WAS EQUALLY UNLOOKED FOR. ^{INSULT FOR} Suddenly, she was ~~striking~~ back at them, sometimes yelling John's name and sometimes throwing back the insults ^{so} adequately, that Nicodemus blazingly wondered whether ~~his~~ ^{the} Capernaum aunts had been right.

An oath ~~he hadn't thought he contained~~ ^{FROM} was ripped ~~out~~ of him. ~~He pulled at her.~~ He GRABBED ~~her~~ AND ^{carried her fighting} PLUCKED HER CLEAN, ^{DROOPED} ~~he pulled her off the ground and~~ ^{set her on her feet} from the wall. She fought him and he shouted at her and bullied her until suddenly the fight went out of her and she was limp and ^{ORROR} WEeping. ^{AWAY FROM THE WALL, HE} He held her until she quieted.

His eyes were tortured. He felt crazy himself. He thought the stars were paling and he said a quick prayer. ~~that they might quicker pale.~~ If the boy was safe at daylight, he would be alright.

— SPACE —

Quartus had been puzzled before, but now the puzzle was behind him. In his book, Janus was the one who made the decisions. Something had happened to ~~scare up the woman~~ ^{SOUR THE RELATION}

KINSHIP BETWEEN THE WOMAN

and her young Isaac with the boss. He had liked the ^{LITTLE} ~~young~~ Isaac. He was the only Isaac he had liked, he would tell the world. The kid had contained salt, and a tongue like rawhide, and was smart with his fists. But perhaps there had been something wrong with him which he, Quartus, had not guessed. He, Quartus, was sometimes soft. A legionnaire could not be soft, the ^{CAPTAIN} ~~captain~~ always said. The young Isaac had found his soft spot. That had been all. But he guessed something had been wrong. There was always something wrong with the jews. Something wrong — inside, he guessed. Something always rotten inside of them. Only a Roman was sound wood through and through. The others, Greeks, Egyptians, jews (~~he thought of them in the common~~) they were always spongy at the ^{MIDDLE} ~~middle~~. Sure, he had liked the young Isaac. But now it was not his ^{BAG} ~~bag~~ o' ^{BOLTS} ~~bolts~~. If his stiff ^{ARMY-TRAINED} ~~back~~ had been capable of shrugging on the march, ^{WHILE} ~~he~~ would have shrugged. He kicked his foot steadily beside Janus in the ^{ROMAN} ~~patrol~~ step. Behind them,

^{MARCHED} ~~the Roman patrol~~ ^{THE} ~~patrol~~ squad.

Janus went about it with the precision of a machine. Bleakly, sparingly he had issued his orders. Fetch the boy in, alive. He himself had turned out with Quartus' patrol. He needed not to have done so, but he had found it impossible to remain at ^{FORT} ~~Fort~~ Antonia.

He had thought of getting drunk and had gone to the officers' tavern, but had drawn back without entering when he saw Max Seneca and Guiseppe Zellini slopping about in there. They may be comrades in arms, but he could not consider ~~him~~ with any kindness the thought of mixing socially with either of the two. He preferred the company of Quartus.

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He strode ~~him~~ along in the easy patrol stride and kept his mind ^{SWEPT} ~~clean~~ ^{SWEPT} ~~clean~~. Nothing must enter it, save the job at hand. If his mind ~~took~~ ^{Pilate} ~~took~~ to turning to Mary, he only had to remember how ~~he~~ had looked at him. First and foremost, ^{AND} ~~and~~ to a bottomless pit with the rest! He must beat that crooked priest and the trap he had set for him. He had only to remember ^{THAT} ~~he~~ had almost stepped with both feet into it, and why he had almost stepped into it.

If his mind took to turning to her, he had only to remember how she had used him and would have willingly left him there for the Temple to collect, had not Pilate, because of their kinship, thrown him a second chance. But for this, in a day or two he

would have been on the way to Rome. No doubt, though, they would have given him one last job. ^{JOBBING THEM} They would have made him take the place of Zellini on the crucifixion detail. The ~~curious~~ ^{curious} job. The nasty task which so suited Guiseppe Zellini. To haul the ~~Nazarene~~ ^{Nazarene} ~~man~~ out of the city to that charnel house called the Place of Skulls and there measure him for the cross, with hammer and nail. To stand with the squad, like the chief vulture, watching the young recruits whom you were blooding, howling at them if they grew green in the face, waiting for the man on the cross to go out of his body. Sometimes, if they had no friends, you had to take them down yourself afterwards.

He strode on, his face cold and remote, a machine ~~in~~ in motion.

I am not supposed to have a code of mercy. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ I am arresting the son of a woman I could have loved, and turning him over to her Jewish priest so he may know that the sickle of Rome, which I am, spares no favourites. That MORALLY UNFAITHFUL, she has been ~~XXXXXX~~, is no matter. I could see her now and not wring her neck. I could meet her now and not squeeze her beautiful neck. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

This is nothing personal. Nothing between her ~~XXXXXX~~ and me. HE WATCHED THE PALING ^{HE} "EYES WATCHFUL. IT IS THE ^{SAID} morning," he ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{to} curtly ^{to} Quartus.

"~~XXXXXX~~ ^{IN THE} ~~then an hour~~ and ~~these~~ heathen priests ^{SOON} will be sounding their horns."

Janus threw up his hand and the squad halted. He spoke in a low voice to Quartus. "You think any of the other squads may have picked him up?"

Quartus shook his head. "No, sir. I told them the minute they did so they should send runners after us."

"Hmm. Queer — where could he be hiding?"

Quartus chuckled. "He's a clever one, that boy. Smarter than a horse trader he —"

"I did not ask you for a list of his virtues," Janus said coldly.

Quartus bit it off. He had forgotten. They were ^{HUNTING} ~~XXXXXX~~ the boy. He scowled and again kept scowling at the boy's memory until he was ^{again} in the right frame of mind.

He snarled softly: "When I see him, I'm going to twist his —!"

"You are going to do what I tell you," Janus snapped. SUNLIGHT SMOTE THE TOPS ~~OF THE CITY~~ ^{HE} ~~XXXXXX~~ heard the burst of ^{SOUNDS} ~~XXXXXX~~ from the Joppa gate.

"Let's go, ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{SO} ~~XXXXXX~~ see what's on," Janus commanded.

"Squad, forward," ~~XXXXXX~~ Quartus said glumly.

The long, sensitive face of Nicodemus looked down at her as he rose and took the few paces forward. The ~~soft linen~~ cloak of Mediterranean soft linen made from the finest flax fell in/folds from his shoulders. Like many of the aristocratic Jerusalem Jews, he affected the style of the toga, draped ^{OVER} ~~over~~ his left shoulder. Mary too had taken to the Roman palla, the mantle she now threw back from her ~~back~~ head, revealing her face as she confronted him.

He had brought her here from the horrible Wall, to wait until She had refused to sleep or lie down. it would be time for ~~the~~ ~~Joseph~~ John to appear. They had talked but escape the ~~subject~~ grasp around everything ~~and~~ had not been able to ~~grasp~~ grasp of the events which were ~~shattering~~ destroying so much they both loved.

In a ~~low~~ subdued voice, Nicodemus was saying, "I suspect that both Annas and Caiaphas knew I had private talks with your Nazarene. It was no crime, then. ~~But now that they~~ But now that they have proscribed him, it could be so construed. The law, depending on whose hands hold the reins, can travel backwards or forwards. Not enough, I daresay, to send me to prison, but uncomfortable enough. I do not know how ineffective my, er, lapse of judgment may have made me."

Her eyes were grave on his.

"I have sometimes wondered why really did you go to see Jesus."

He shrugged. "And I have told you before. Out of curiosity, perhaps. My insatiable desire ~~for~~ for knowledge. His fame was growing. In the words of ~~that~~ that Simon Something fellow, the fisherman who seems to be his deputy ..."

"Simon Peter."

"Ah, yes. Quite a fellow. ~~Exaggerates~~ ^{SOMEWHAT} but very impressive.

Told me once that all the world had gone after ~~his~~ his master. I last week when told it to the ~~Sanhedrin~~ Sanhedrin/~~that~~ day he arrived in Jerusalem I don't think I endeared myself to the Council to that tumultuous welcome. /

* * UPCOUNTRY fellows from the little villages around Galilee WHOSE IDEA OF THE WORLD IS LIMITED TO THE DISTANCE THEY CAN WALK. ANYWAY, MY ROBERT

with that remark. But even when he rode into town on that ridiculous ass, of no semblance whatever to a royal progress, the people still hailed him like a Caesar. It really was as if ~~all~~ ^{ETHIOPIANS,} the world, Romans, Greek, ^A Egyptians, Arabs, everyone, had, quite literally, gone after him. ^{PERHAPS THIS IS WHAT SIMON FELLOW MEANT. IN THAT CASE, HE HAS A POINT.} However, you asked, why did I go."

He strode away, stood at the window, his back to her.

"I wondered whether he was really the Messiah. ^{THAT IS WHY I WENT @ I WONDERED @} Was he the one who was due to come? ^{THE ONE TO} lead us into becoming, once again, a nation? ^{WAS} HE our latter-day Moses? And if he was, how would he do it? How would he put into us, a defeated people, a people whose God ^{grew} ~~was~~ so disgusted with ~~us~~ ^{us} at times, he allowed ~~them~~ ^{us} to be pummelled almost into oblivion, how would he put the will and the strength in us to fight? Would we use guile or javelin? against Rome? More than that, to fight ~~against~~ ^{against} against ourselves: ~~our~~ ^{against} our greed, our faithlessness, our ~~push-to-sacrifice~~ ^{eagerness to obtain} a better lamb ~~for~~ ^{FOR SACRI-} neighbour's. FILE than ~~mix~~ ^{so much} our/ ~~perhaps~~ ^{perhaps} Perhaps, above all, for on this fact/rested, ~~what~~ ^{what} kind of man was he? Was he a wilderness saint, given to browsing ^{seeking God in contemplation?} ~~in~~ nature, ^{seeking} God in the bush? Or was he a man ^{FOR THE ARENA,} ruthless enough to play the ruthless God that the ~~sacred~~ scriptures ~~teach~~ ^{teach} us about. Our sacred ~~scrolls~~ ^{scrolls} make no effort to conceal that our Jehovah ~~is~~ ^{OUR BELOVED JEHOVAH} is a deity of mixed emotions. All of them startlingly ^{human} human. ~~He~~ ^{He} had no compunction against blasting our ~~ancestors~~ ^{so many of our} out of existence as He did/ ~~mix~~ ^{mix} foes who dared resist our piratical inroads into their sovereignty, their land, their cattle, whenever He ordered us to. You know, my dear, our Jehovah is so much like us that it is no wonder our love and loyalty to Him is of a force powerful enough to make us put our ~~lives~~ ^{lives} on the line for Him. From the earliest beginning, Father Abram was ready to lay poor Isaac on the altar, for Him. ^{So what kind of man was this Jesus who called himself also the Messiah?} ^{MAYBE} ~~She~~ ^{She} had the awful thought, while Nicodemus spoke, that ~~history~~ ^{history} ^{WAS BEING REPEATED @} ^{WOULD} ~~was~~ ^{was} being repeated, ^{IT WAS THERE,} in that part of the sacred scroll ~~entitled~~ ^{ENTITLED} ~~Genesis~~ ^{Genesis} and read so frequently in synagogue. Abram had not hesitated to offer his son on the altar. ~~The Nazarene had~~

Abram, the priests said, pleased God. ^{AND IN HIS TURN,} God ^{SO, THE LOGIC,} was pleased with Abram. The Nazarene ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ had said he was the Son of God. ^{LIKE ISAAC,} Was he, too, ^{to} be laid on an altar? She buried her face in her hands. Another thought rose unbidden into her head. Abram, with what she sometimes guiltily thought of as exquisite cruelty, ~~he~~ had made Isaac carry the wood for his own sacrifice. In the ~~rituals~~ rituals of the legal murder ~~the~~ the Romans called crucifixion, the victim was made to carry his own cross. The wood. Her mind ~~rested~~ ^{GAVE}. She clutched at the arms of the chair. She stared dry-eyed at the floor.

Nicodemus turned from the window. His eyes smiled in his deadly serious face.

"Our God is so human that I have no doubt whatever we are made in his image and likeness. ^{Perhaps I wanted to see the face of Jesus.}"

It took her a ^{WHILE} ~~while~~ to find her voice. She smiled back bravely.

"Don't be blasphemous, Demmy."

"No, my dear Cousin, no," he said softly. "I am not ~~being~~ ^{think,} blasphemous. I believe in my God with a passion that nobody, I ~~imagine~~ imagines. I tell you this because I have the feeling that none of us in Jerusalem, or, for that matter, if you can believe Simon-what's-his-name, nobody in the world will ever be the same after tonight. ^{IT IS THE NIGHT FOR TRUTH. I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEELING THAT TONIGHT IS OUR LAST CHANCE FOR TRUTH.}"

And it was strange that dear ~~Demmy~~ worldly-wise Demmy was repeating almost thought for thought what was in her mind. Except of course that Demmy was doing it out of an intellectual curiosity. On the other hand, why was she with the Nazarene? Yes, ^{UNDERLINE} with him as much as any of those poor unlettered nomads, the disciples of the tragic young Rabbi who ^{NOW} had been brought down like a sparrow, by the arrow of that Annas. What had ~~taken place~~ happened within her? The upheaval/without volition had taken over her life, giving her this knowledge of rightness

that was not, could ~~MMX~~ not, be knowledge at all, since there was no
~~SEQUENCE OF LEARNING~~ to it? Only an awesome, frightening, yet serene certainty that it was
 all, somehow, right. It had no logic, yet it was, ~~MMX~~ somehow, ~~the~~ truth.
 It was an experience she was sure she would never be able to explain.
 Something had occurred in her personality, in her soul, that had made her
 come alive, really alive, in the most peculiar way. What was the curious
 phrase the Nazarene had used to Demmy? Poor Demmy had been outraged ^{BY IT}
Born again. That was how she felt. Born again. On this night of be-
 trayal, cruelty, death, she felt born again.

"Demmy!" she whispered.

But he was staring out of the window, his back to her, his

hands clasped behind him, shoulders carried high and tense. Nicodemus
 twisted his head to the east. The sky was rosy. He sighed heavily.

"It is a night like no other night," he said.

"It is an ugly night," she said harshly.

A small star fell and scattered.

"And a bad Sabbath eve it promises to be," he muttered.

She struggled wearily to her feet.

"It is time to return to the Wall. I understand from John that,
 according to the rules ~~of the game~~ of the game, daybreak is when it
 happens. His friendly enemy, Saul ---"

She stopped, stared at Nicodemus. "Of course! Oh, Demmy! All we
 have to do ~~to~~ to find John is to seek ~~to~~ Saul, and he is more than likely
 to be out in the open!"

--SPACE---

121-D

He had slept again and awoke wound up real tight. He knew it in his legs, and in his belly, and in the front of his head. He would never be able to stand up again as long as he lived. He was in a knot and somebody had drawn the knot real tight.

The stars were really paling now. The fainter ones were gone and the brighter ones were going ~~up~~. Up, past his head, he could see the top of the parapet distinctly and the colour of the sky above it, which was a blue like a poor sort of egg. The kind of egg Saul and the big boys used to ~~throw at~~ ^{THROW AT} the meetings of the Zealots, ~~for throwing~~.

Cocks were crowing down in the city and the dogs had stopped barking. The blood beat a drum at his temples and he just knew he was getting tighter. ~~A MAN SHOUTED~~ ^{WHINNIED LOUDLY.} SOMETHING UNRECOGNIZABLE AND A MARE. His mouth was dry and he could bet his palms were wet. There, he knew it. And he wanted to turn his head but he couldn't turn an inch. He wanted to sit up and look around him, but everytime he thought of it ~~A MUSCLE SAGGED~~ ^{A MUSCLE SAGGED} and his legs refused to move.

Krrump krrump krrump kirrump went the sentry's footbeats past his head as the soldier drilled his post ^{along} the wall. ~~Sometimes they~~ ^{FOOTBEATS} slowed near his head, as if they would halt on the next ~~beat~~ ^{JOLT, RIGHT BESIDE HIS HEAD.}. And ~~at those times~~, when he shut his eyes tight, he saw it plain as ever. ~~Saw~~ ^{MUSCULAR} the sentry's lips draw away from his teeth, and the ~~muscular~~ forearm going back ~~and~~ ^{COME} forward and the point of the sword going ^{IN,} into him —

The sweat broke out under his armpits, and He felt cold all over. ~~HE WANTED TO BE~~ ^{OUT OF IT.} ~~IN~~ ^{NOT BE HERE SOON} ~~He~~ ^{DID} not care what Saul or the Committee would say. He had to be out of it. There were things ~~coming~~ ^{RUSHING} up into his throat and he was ready to vomit. He had to be off the wall.

He opened his eyes, the sweat ~~was~~ ^{CHILLING HIM} all over, ~~prickling~~ ^{TO GO} inside his nostrils. He knew now he ~~never~~ ^{HAD} wanted to do any wall. He wanted ~~home~~ ^{PILLOWS}. He wanted to be in bed now with the ~~soft~~ ^{HIS HEAD} under ~~his~~ and the covers warm over him and his mother breathing softly in the room next to him and ~~sure~~ ^{SOFT AND STRONG} if you only whispered, Mother, ~~she~~ ^{IN} would be ~~and~~ and her arms ~~about~~ ^{TO GO} you, ~~IN NO TIME~~ ^{TAKE IN}.

He had never ~~seen~~ ^{BEEN OUT LATE ENOUGH TO WITNESS THE DAWN. TO} how night drew away from the world. He had ~~a notion~~ ^{HE WAS SMALLER} a notion ~~when~~ ^{that} that night was lifted off the world somewhat like the cover from a tureen of soup. But

at 121-E

*
SO SAUL HAD CALLED HIM MOTHER'S BOY! SAUL HAD SAID
HE WOULD NEVER TAKE HIM ON A JOURNEY SINCE HE
WOULD BE SNIVELLING FOR HIS MOTHER BEFORE THEY
HAD TRAVELLED A LEAGUE. BUT
SAUL WAS WRONG. SAUL DID
NOT UNDERSTAND LOVE; THAT
TO LOVE AND TO NEED WAS
NOT WEAKNESS. HE BREATHED IN DEEPLY. RESOLUTELY,
HE SNIFFED. HIS FACE HARDENED. HE WOULD
SHOW SAUL.

JANUARY		FEBRUARY	
S	7 14 21 28	S	4 11 18 25
M	1 8 15 22 29	M	5 12 19 26
T	2 9 16 23 30	T	6 13 20 27
W	3 10 17 24 31	W	7 14 21 28
T	4 11 18 25	T	1 8 15 22
F	5 12 19 26	F	2 9 16 23
S	6 13 20 27	S	3 10 17 24

of course all that was nonsense.

122

~~It~~ It seemed ~~that~~ that the night sank into the ground, but ever so slowly. As if forever afterwards you were doomed to live in a half-lit world like the ~~Blind Ones~~ Blind Ones.

they said

He remembered the Blind One whom/the Nazarene had made to see. But Saul had said it was a trick. A trick to sell the Nazarene to the people as a great doctor.

"For," Saul had said, "I bet if you scratch the Blind One hard enough, underneath you will find Galilean fisherman! One of his own country-bumpkin friends pretending he had been healed. Just as the only

ones he has been said to have raised from the dead were his own bosom friend, Lazarus; ^{IT HAPPENS} and, note this, away out in stupid Bethany. Then there

is the girl in silly Capernaum. Why does he not raise them in Jerusalem? Why does he not raise a total stranger from the dead here in Jerusalem?"

And since you did not know whether he had ever raised a total stranger from the dead, ^{TOTAL STRANGERS HAD BEEN RAISED} you made up some, saying these ~~had happened~~ in Capernaum and Bethany, not in Jerusalem.

But these could not stand the test of Saul's tongue and you were thrown into confusion with your face hot ~~and~~ and a noise in your head and you ran from there with their RIDICULE CHASING you. Ran, until your limbs were useless and you fell down into the THORNY buttercups which grew by the roadside and lay there hating all of them. ^{FOR YOU WERE A}

~~laughing-stock~~ laughing-stock. ^{NOBODY SHOULD BE A LAUGHING-STOCK,}

It was growing lighter.

He could (now count) the great stones built into the parapet. He ^{JOHN MARK,} was three stones long. One ^{STONE} at his head down past his shoulder, another at his middle and the third somewhere at his ankles. When the soldiers caught him, all they would need ^{TO} do was to remove three stones and insert him and mortar up the wall again and he would have disappeared. And he would be never caught. He could ~~never~~ hope to run again with his knees here all gone to water. But —

But he must be off the wall. He must try — try — try —
^{SAT UP AND HE}

He ~~gripped~~ gripped the edge of the shelf ^{and} as his feet dangled into space. He forced his back against the parapet. ~~and~~ The flesh of his face stiffen ^{ed} with fear.

← He thought he ^{WAS A GONER.} ~~was a goner~~ ^{AND BECAME A GONER.} He thought he had ~~dropped~~ dropped like a stone into the courtyard. His bones would have broken off into bits as a piece of rotten rock. He licked his lips and pressed the back of his head to the parapet and

closed his eyes.

The panic at last died. He tried to whisper the words of the Hallel to show himself that he was alright again but the words were dammed up inside. He could remember nothing. He was a piece of rotten rock. He drew in a breath, held it there, and then pushed it out. That made him feel better. He sat up.

Daybreak.

There were voices in the courtyard below. Wheels creaked. He pushed his head slowly forward, chin up, and looked ~~down~~ ^{DOWN} cautiously past his ~~chin~~ ^{nose}. There ^{it} was alright. Except for a little giddiness, ~~at the top of the wall~~, it was alright. He could see people ^{MOVING} ~~near the door~~ in the courtyard. They were the early hucksters trundling their barrows ~~with~~ of ~~various~~ watermelons and syrups, and some with the cages holding the sacrificial doves for sale in the Temple courts. And — and — there were some shadowy figures standing over there, under that stunted olive ~~tree~~. He drew back quickly.

It was Saul. It was Saul and ~~the Committee~~ ^{the Committee. From the class at school}. They had come to see him do the Wall. But ~~he~~ ^{I will not} be doing the Wall! — he wanted to scream at them. ^{Instead he} ~~he~~ ^{his} rubbed ~~his~~ ^{his} toes, REFLECTIVELY.

Sombrely, he told himself he would go down. He would ~~edge~~ ^{edge} along the shelf and gain the steps and then walk boldly down ~~the~~ into the courtyard and say he would not do the ~~the~~ ^{the wall} Wall. He was a man and he could make his own decisions. He could not do ~~it~~ ^{it} this morning. Not after the night he had. That was it. It would be foolish to do the Wall after a night like the one he ~~had~~ ^{JUST} had. ~~He started~~ ^{He started} ~~to do the wall~~.

[SOMEONE CALLED HIS NAME.

— — — SPACE — — —

John Mark stared unbelievably, ~~the night~~ ^{the night}. It was his mother, ~~the night~~ ^{the night}. It was she, ^{did} calling his name. Her voice was strange, but he would recognize it anywhere. What ~~it mean?~~ ^{it mean?} What was she doing out here? She hadn't seen him, he was sure. Then how had she known he was up here?

Her voice was peculiar, going up and down, plaintive like the people selling cool drinks out of earthenware ~~and~~ jars in the summer at the lakeside villages. But she was

no seller of cool drinks. She was his mother, to be proud of. The way she was beautiful, and knew things quickly, and left a man to be a man. Then why was she pleading his name, calling him to come down, crying that the game is off? Weeping that she loved him, making believe he was a perfumed little ~~XXXX~~ ^Rhorr^R with curled hair and kohl on his eyelids as he had seen some who had come in sedans with their rich parents for the Passover?

Then, furiously, he knew it.

It was Saul. Saul had got to her. Saul had told her he would be on the Wall and that the soldiers would kill him. Told her, so she would come and get him down off the Wall, so he could slink home behind her with his tail between his ~~XX~~ legs like a shamed pup, while Saul and the Committee ~~X~~ walked behind in laughing their ~~XXXXXX~~ heads off! He could kill that Saul! He ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ tightened his lips for fortitude in this treacherous, mixed-up world.

A blade of light smote his eyes.

His head jerked up. It was the sun. Sunlight in his eyes. The trembling entered his limbs again; he was sweating all over. ~~?~~ He tried to remember what Cousin Demmy had said about the ^{Temple} ceremony ~~ixxixextemix~~ at daybreak. The two hundred and forty watching priests were by now at their stations. The fire would be glowing on the altar in the middle of the terrace.

Ah, there it was!

There was the priest of the pinnacle of the Temple crying down that the morning was shining already!

Pensively almost, John Mark watched the ceremony unfold. ^{Soon} ~~soon~~ now, he thought, one John Mark would become High Priest ^{of} ~~on~~ the Wall.

He heard the voice of the priest ~~XX~~ in the court.

"Is the sky lit up as far as Hebron?"

"As far as Hebron," the priest on the pinnacle replied.

And the two hundred and forty priests raised the silver trumpets to their lips.

Lit up as far as Hebron ... Lit up ... Lit up ... Hebron ... Hebron...

Whirled and clashed the wheels in his head. A cutting at his belly and his knees ~~xxxjxix~~ like jelly. His mouth opened and closed ~~silently~~ in silence like a fish.

And then the trumpets came.

They came as at the end of nothing and the beginning of everything. The soaring music from the trumpets ~~in~~ in a ~~sil~~ shower of silver, shooting through him, lifting him to his feet in one fluent motion that

66 'God *thyselb!* *> 55*
 "God of Israel, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself!" ~~He cried triumphantly.~~

It was all here in his head now. Every stanza of the psalm which he had thought he had forgotten forever. He was ready now. He would go to the left as he had planned; and then he would work to the right, roving at speed between the ramparts and the garrison blockhouses and gaining the right corner keep, then back again to the stairs for the courtyard by the time the Hallel was completed. ~~He sprang~~

He sprang from ~~the~~ parapet to ~~the~~ platform and commenced ^{HIS} race along the wall, stringing the words of the psalm ~~along~~ out behind him, shrill banners whipping in the sunlight.

The soldiers at the embrasures stared uncomprehendingly at the running ^{figure,} ~~man~~ cloak streaming behind him, legs briskly working. Then, one of the legionnaires, a short, squatt man whose ~~stained~~ jerkin was stained with long service, remembered something and chucklingly imparted it to the younger fellow beside him. "It is some silly sort of game ^{have} since ~~the young Isaacs have taken to playing~~ ^{Let} They did it, last year, last Passover ~~on~~ eve. ~~Let the young fellow have his fun if none of the officers appear.~~"

Anyway, it was a break in the monotony of watch; especially with them doing double duty since last night because of some lousy affair with the Temple.

John Mark skidded around ^{a blockhouse} at the end of his beat to the left and took off to the right, up the slight tilt of the wall. He was ^{getting} ~~becoming~~ angry ^{for} ~~that~~ the soldiers seemed to ^{TAKE HIS BUSINESS} ~~be taking it~~ for a joke. None of them had made a real pass at him yet as he had raced ^{verses} down the wall, hurling the biting ~~words~~ right and left at their faces. His arms pumping, ~~his~~ his face earnest and accusing, he stared straight at the legionnaire of the stained jerkin, veered towards him and hurled at him:

~~"They murder the widow and the stranger; and put the fatherless to death. O, ye fools, when will ye understand?"~~

The old soldier broke out a grin and made a playful pass at his legs with his javelin. John Mark leaped aside nimbly without a jar in his stride.

"Look out, little Isaac!" the younger soldier laughed. "Father Moses mightn't like your blasphemy!"

But the others had got the idea. They were all making passes at him as he flew by. He did not know they were playing. He thought it was the real thing. Now the game ~~was~~

CHAPTER 24

Some kind of queer game was going on up there. A woman of Antioch rolled her eyes ~~back~~ and looked up over her shoulder at the tall Ascalonian wrestler with whom she had travelled to Jerusalem for the Passover.

~~She~~ ^{she} ~~was~~ ^{SHE SAID} "Something new in this creaky old town at last!" ~~in her~~ in her light voice.

He was big and ^{SLOW} ~~slow~~ brain ~~ed~~ ^{ed} but he was heavily handsome from ~~the~~ beetling brow to ~~his~~ powerful legs ~~stood apart~~. ~~She had taken up with him a week ago and she~~ ~~still loved him~~ ~~exactly~~.

"~~Do~~ do they have that game in Ascalon? I'd love to put ~~you~~ you up there to play that game with the Romans! *You would throw them around like DISCUSSES.*"

He grinned around, a little sheepishly, at the faces in the small crowd which had turned from staring up at the wall to stare at the owner of the light voice. She put her ~~head~~ head back on his chest and rubbed her cheek on the swell of muscles there. ~~As she did so, a sharp pain~~ ~~at the junction of her lower lip~~ ~~between her~~ ~~teeth and her eyes~~ ~~closed~~. "O, ~~but~~ but you'd ~~be~~ ~~out~~ ~~out~~!"

A few of the men grinned, ~~and a pig~~ ~~between his lips~~ ~~and~~ ~~an old woman~~ ^{eating} ~~pieces of fruit~~ ~~from a bowl~~, snorted and looked around for a pair of ears and found Mary ^{Mark} standing beside her and muttered: "She should be stoned from ^{DAVID'S} ~~the~~ city."

^{NEVER HEARD HERE} Mary ~~She~~ She had descended into a quiet hell ~~all~~ all of her own. Her lips moved in a prayer. ^{only} But it was a flat prayer, with no spirit in it. She repeated it because her ~~reflexes~~ ^{reflexes} pursued it. Nicodemus turned his head like an animal at bay. He had sent his men to hunt up a centurion — any officer who could halt what would happen on the wall. He thought of Janus Aurelius with a ^{great} ~~need~~ ~~need~~.

Quartus, concealed with the rest of the squad behind a buttress, stole a glance at the ~~quarantine~~ ^{of Janus} cold face and wished he would do something. He knew the guards up there were merely playing with the boy. But he expected a turn in the game soon, anytime.

It would come anytime the lazing, dozing, lead-bottom of a noncom in charge of the guard detail choose to ~~leave his bed and be out on the wall~~ ^{leave his bed and be out on the wall} ~~exposing his beautifully~~ ^{PALE} ~~countenance to the ravages of the~~ ^{Wall}

weather. Quartus thought he would like to have that noncom for a week in his Company. He would take to him as a tiger took to uncooked meat. He would open him up. Quartus thought lovingly on how he would open up the noncom and take out the lead and put such a fine spirit in the man that he would be dead within a week. Dead from over-exertion.

He spat in the dust at his feet and swivelled his head suddenly to scowl at the squadmen crowding up behind him. He wondered what in two oaths they were crowding up behind him for.

He had liked the young fool Isaac. He had thought the boy had salt in spite of the silks he had lived in at David Street. He wished it had turned out to be somebody else; but what the boss said, stood.

"Back up — you lumps o' loose acts!" he snarled ~~at the squadmen~~ at the squadmen.

— SPACE —

Some swifts were disturbed and flew up out of a grove of eucalypti outside the wall. They flew up and wheeled, screaming, ~~the swifts~~ and flew screaming over the wall into the city. The noncom growled from his morning doze into wakefulness. He heard the screams of the swifts and the boy's shrill ^{ing} voice outside on the battlements and his head jerked up. ^{GROWLING,} ~~quickly~~ he reached for his helmet.

John Mark brought his run back ^{and settled down into a steady trot} ~~almost into a trot~~. He was eluding them easily. He knew the Roman soldiers were slow and clumsy, but he had not thought them this slow and clumsy. The way Saul had talked, you would believe you would be nearly pinned through the throat at every step. Instead, you did it easier than ^{playing} ~~chase~~ ~~you were mulling~~. Why, here he was, at the end of his run to the right, and none of their thrusts had come even remotely near.

"I will rise up against the wicked —" he cried at a young, red-headed legionaire leaning against the rampart around which he was to turn. The young fellow regarded him quizzically and said: "Go it, little Abram."

John Mark cut the psalm long enough to ^{WRINKLE HIS NOSE AT} ~~contemptuously~~ the soldier. Why, the louts weren't even trying! He put out his hand and fended around the rampart, picked up the psalm again and began the down run. ~~then he was startled and almost tripped~~

But then a big voice bombarded the morning.

The noncom ducked his head under the low arch and stepped ~~out~~ outside. He blinked in the glare of the sun and knuckled his eyes. He stared again, and it was really unbelievable. But there it was. So he held back his head and loosened a roar ~~under~~ that swung to him the ~~the~~ head of every man ~~on duty~~ on the wall. leftovers from

"You ~~bloody, bloody leftovers from~~ last week's washing!" was what the noncom roared. "What do you think you're here for? A picnic? That's the young Hebrew they and bring him over here!" want at the Temple — get him ~~led down the stairs~~

SPACE

The swifts found better lodgings on a roof across from the courtyard and their Deep silence fell on the wall. The screamings ended suddenly as ~~the~~ begun. ~~And with that cry, and the deep bellow~~ which had fallen on top of the wall, the ~~silence was broken~~ people in the courtyard stood like islands ~~in a sea except for the~~ bobbing of their heads as they sought the source ~~of the bellow. They were~~ of the bellow. ~~that had come~~ of the bellow. ~~and brought a sort of sparkling with a~~

They knew ~~that~~ that the sport ^{HAD BEEN} spoilt. The menace of authority ^{WAS} in that voice. Something had gone wrong with the game ~~the~~ ~~they had been having~~ on ~~top of~~ the wall. Grudgingly, for ^{everybody} ~~they~~ cared ~~to~~, they knew that ^a grim phase had ^{begun} ~~come~~. A woman of Antioch, her black eyes flashing underneath the tent ^{of} silken shawl she wore ^{ON} her head, flung up her hands so the jewelled bangles ~~the~~ flashed and clashed like a dancer's, ~~and~~ ~~screamed~~:

"Lord God of Hosts — the Romans have killed him up there!" *she shrieked.*

Mary Mark moaned ~~and~~ and Nicodemus caught her in his arms ~~as she~~ ^{said softly and UGLILY,} held her there and turned his head towards the woman of Antioch and ~~raised~~ ~~his~~

~~Get out of~~ here — get out of here —!" *The wrestler grinned sheepishly.*

Quartus ^{looked} ~~stared~~ hard at the back of Janus' neck. No, he reckoned they wouldn't be moving out after all. He had seen the ^{Captain} ~~captain~~ lean ^{forward} as if he would step from ~~the~~ concealment, but then he had seen the movement stilled and the muscles cord at the back of his neck and he reckoned they wouldn't be moving after all. He guessed the boss was tougher than he ~~had~~ thought. Well, the boss always knew how to handle his troubles. But had it been his woman, he would have gone out there for her. Cousin or

no cousin, ⁱⁿ arms was ⁱⁿ arms. He ~~snarled~~ ^{SNARLED} at the squadmen.

"Hold it — who you think you're pushing?" ~~he snarled~~

— ^{SPACE}
^{FILLED WITH VEGETABLES}

A man who bore two hampers ^{on} a pole across his shoulders ~~loaded with greens~~, rested his wrists on the pole and flung back his head and shouted up at the wall:

"You murdering heathens — you would kill an infant?"

"But they have killed him already, I tell you!" shrieked the woman of Antioch, her bangles clashing. "I saw them run the spears into him — I saw them!"

A fat man, with doves fluttering against the bars of the cage he carried on his head, said: "They haven't killed him yet — I saw him ~~move~~ move."

"They held him by his heels and struck his head to the stones!" yelled a man who had climbed into the stunted olive.

Saul licked his lips and his face was very white. One of the smaller boys of the Committee vomited suddenly and they stopped looking up at the wall and looked at him. And one of the children said: "You will catch it now, Bar-Amos. You will catch it now for vomiting on your clothes."

And about then, they heard him. Heard his voice piping it on top of the wall.

^{old} The/woman who had given him food in the inn threw her shawl over her head and said in a quaver to the pilgrims around her:

"Lord God of our fathers — he is singing the Great Hallel!"

The blast of the ^{NON-COM'S} voice had ~~caught him unawares~~ caught him unawares and he had stumbled and almost tripped. ^{STAYED IN A} He recovered and braked his run. He ^{WAS HALF CROUCH,} ~~in a semi-crouch~~, his head pushed forward ~~and all of him~~ tense as a pointer. He saw the man blinking in the ~~sunlight~~ sunlight and the soldiers frozen against ~~the~~ ramparts, and ~~the~~ breastwalls. He watched them, unable to move, as the purport of the words and the command reached them and their heads ~~turned~~ returned towards him. ~~It was a year he watched them. It was a year~~ ^{THERE} ^{WAS A SCAPEGOAT} and a day he watched them. Watched all the good humour and the indulgence drain from them and they became machines again. And he was ~~pinned to a~~ pinned to a

rockface.

He saw the slow lift of the weapons to the ready and the feet moving deliberately forward, the ~~MAILED~~ feet, the big-knuckled knees, the sway of the leather jerkins, slowly, ~~For now they had him.~~ ^{THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD HIM.} ~~They were so sure they had him.~~ ~~They were so sure they had him.~~ ~~They were so sure they had him.~~

He laughed suddenly, a boyish laughter that tinkled and made them frown uncertainly. He laughed for he felt everything coming back into him.

He spoke up. He made the words ring the way ~~as~~ Cousin Demmy ~~could~~ could make them ring. He put wings on them and they ^{MOUNTED} ~~went up~~ powerfully, ^{as} ~~like~~ eagles. He made arrows of some and he aimed them and drew back the bowstrings and out they flew, true and singing. He handled some of the words lovingly, those telling of the greatness of Israel; and others he made into millstones and ^{rolled} ~~put~~ them down upon the heathen Romans. He hoped the master, Gamaliel, was down in the courtyard to hear them. For never were the words of the Hallel spoken with the aching glory to a tongue as they were spoken now. He made his voice grow taller as they came nearer and he rose on his toes to be tall as the words.

"Your idols are silver and gold; the work of men's hands. They have mouths and speak not ... They that make them are like unto them ..."

And when they thought they had him, he was ready. He had seen it long ago. He whirled and his clutching fingers ^{reached} ~~grasped~~ the top of ^{the} ~~the~~ rampart and he swung himself ^{UP.} ~~up~~. A hurled javelin clanged loudly against the stones, ~~and~~ the noncom blinking in the doorway, ^{yelled:} ~~cried:~~ "Don't kill him, you fools! Orders are to take him alive!"

John Mark grinned ~~with his teeth~~ ^{by} tight against his teeth ~~and~~ and leaped from the rampart to the platform and raced towards the stairs, the words tumbling from his lips. He aimed straight for the head of the stairs, drawing the dozen or so guards into a move to intercept, then, less than twenty feet from them he wheeled lightly as a fawn and sprinted for the far side of the wall, drawing them behind him.

^[Metal studded sandals] ~~They~~ were no good for running; if they had asked him he could tell them. They floundered and slipped and they couldn't run free as he, for they had to do it according to the regulations, sideways like crabs scuttling up the beach at Galilee, for they must hold their spears ~~at~~ at their waists with the right arm crooked and holding

the butt and the left arm across their bellies, clutching the shaft ^{CLUMSY} ~~and~~ ^{CLUMSY}

Out of the corners of his eyes he watched the wings pull out and then ~~the~~ circle in to enclose him and he sprinted on, like not knowing, and ^{allowed} ~~with~~ them close ~~and~~; and when they reached for him, he slid his foot forward under him and hit the ground with his body already turning and pushed forward from his hands and feet, while the men above him collided

~~mailed chests~~ ^{GRUNTING} ~~for~~ ^{STAGGERED.} wind and pain as they ~~moved~~

~~He did not~~ His face was pinched and serious. He was out-running a dozen or so of them, leaping sideways from the ^{RESTRAINED} ~~by~~ thrusts they made at him, straining his muscles in sudden halts to wheel back the way he had been coming, springing to the breastworks and off again, jeering at them and yelling the Hallel.

They were slowing up at the unaccustomed run in the sun, but he knew he was ^{TIRING} ~~showing~~ too. ^{OF ANTICIPATION} The ache at his knees and the looks on their faces. He ~~showed his face~~ thought hard. He ^{HAD TO END IT. THE HALLEL WAS SO LONG!} ~~secured a moment's respite by doing a burst for the far parapet, leaping to it and turning back to face them.~~

He saw that the ^{NON-COM} ~~man who~~ ^{TAKEN} ~~had~~ moved now from the doorway of the small blockhouse and ^{AT} ~~himself~~ ^{up} a position ~~on~~ the ~~small~~ head of the stair leading down into the courtyard. The movement had freed, for the chase, the two guards he had placed there earlier. ^{HIS RETREAT WAS STILL CUT OFF EXCEPT THAT NOW THERE WAS JUST ONE} ~~man~~

~~retreat. John Mark~~ ~~remembering something~~ He sucked in good lungfuls of breath, waiting silently as the men closed in.

There were a few verses left, only a few. The rule ^{BY SAUL} ~~laid down~~ was that the Hallel must be completed before ^{REACHING} ~~he reached~~ the courtyard. He waited, watching the soldiers shuffle to right and left, ~~straight down the middle~~ ^{straight down the middle} was the head of the stairs and they thought he would not make a break for ~~it~~ ^{it} since it was guarded. ^{SPECIALLY BY THE LONE NON-COM.} John Mark worked his toes for a grip on the edge of the parapet, head down, quick eyes ^{THE LEGIONNAIRE IN CHARGE HAD SAID THEY} ~~searching.~~

He leaped straight down the central ~~parapet~~ ~~the~~ ~~legionnaire~~ ~~charged~~ ~~that~~ ~~they~~ ~~could~~ ~~not~~ ~~drop~~ ~~their~~ ~~weapons~~ ~~The~~ ~~order~~ ~~was~~ ~~that~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~killed~~ ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~who~~ ~~were~~ ~~not~~ ~~responding~~ ~~to~~ ~~his~~ ~~call~~ ~~found~~ ~~themselves~~ ~~at~~ ~~six~~ ~~and~~ ~~sevens~~ ~~to~~ ~~leap~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~ground~~ ~~and~~ ~~injure~~ ~~him~~ ~~and~~ ~~by~~ ~~their~~

~~train~~ ~~into~~ ^{INTO THINKING} ~~their~~ ^{I WERE} weapons a part of them, ~~they~~ would have no thought of dropping them and using their hands to stop him ~~there~~. ^{HE TOOK OFF.}

The boy tore down the straightway, shrilly piping the verses once more. Then, as he reached the awkwardly bracing ^{legionnaires,} ~~sublime~~ he dodged right and left, fast, changed direction as they flailed about and slipped between them. The noncom bellowed an oath.

He roared: "After him, you jelly-fingered —!" But the abuse was never ended.

For he was staring straight into the eyes of the boy. The young Isaac was heading straight for him. The little stinker was for making a monkey out of him as he had done with the men. And in front of his own men too. Then, by all the gods, he would not pass here. ~~He drew his sword and awaited the oncoming boy,~~ ^{Trembling with rage, he} ~~the dirty little swipe~~ would not pass here. ~~He drew his~~ short cutting sword and awaited the oncoming boy, ~~trembling with rage.~~

John Mark flew straight at him, his heart pounding with fear. He could see that the legionnaire meant to ^{BRING HIM DOWN.} ~~bring him down~~ Somebody down in the courtyard shouted mightily and he knew it was Janus, and he cried at the top of his voice: "Janus!"

But that would be of no use for Janus was too far away to ^{prevent} ~~stop~~ the soldier using his sword and he could not stop nor turn back for it was too late and he had been a fool to believe they would not kill him and he wished he could stop crying out these stupid words of the psalm for they were ^{TAKING HIS WIND} ~~giving him~~ and he needed all the wind he could get and he hated Saul, ^{FOR GETTING HIM INTO THIS.} ~~he~~ He hated Saul more than this ugly legionnaire before him who bared his teeth and moved his sword in tiny arcs and the sword was so shine, it would go into him easily. It would cut past his flesh and go into him easily; easier than the blades of Ben Legion's men and what had become of them now in daylight? Perhaps the Legions changed the form in daylight and went underground like ~~the~~ worms with white undersides who lived two feet underground and fed on corpses — What was a corpse? ^{HE HEARD THE MIGHTY BELLOW OF JANUS} ~~Everything was spinning~~

~~He was with two feet of Roman sword and he was to go into his body.~~ ^{at the non-com's foot.} He twisted and leaped, leaving the spy's cloak ~~dangling from the point of the sword.~~ ^{HORRIBLE} He ~~voiced~~ leaped clean over the wall and the noncom shouted with ^{ONLY} ~~horrible~~ satisfaction; for it seemed to him that the boy had chosen another form of death. ~~signified that his sword was free. The stinker was dead and no court-martial.~~

But John Mark had remembered the shelf on which ^{EARLIER} he had lain. He broke his

~~and saw the legionnaire start and drop his weapon.~~

fall by ~~the~~ clutching at the rough stones, ~~on top of the wall~~. His feet hit the shelf with a jar that shook his teeth. The wall tore at the skin of his ~~forearm~~ and shocked him with the pain. ~~He~~ ^{HEBREW} he heard the gasp and the roar of voices from below. He ~~jumped~~ jumped ~~quickly~~ from the shelf to the steps and raced down them, the last ragged verses tumbling past his lips.

There was a darkness gathering in his head and before his eyes, but he could not look at it, He must look ^{for} light; and, after a little while, he saw her bearing the light towards him, coming out of the dark; coming, running, with ^{Janus} ~~Janus~~ behind her, ^{and} ~~with the confusion behind~~ Cousin Denny running towards him, ^{behind the captain,} ~~with her hands held out for him~~. And he didn't mind ^{anything} ~~that he was hurt~~ as he stumbled into her arms, ~~for the~~ darkness in his head had ~~annihilated the~~ ^{annihilated the} ~~everything~~.

-SPACE-

Janus took the ^{LINEN} ~~linen~~ cloak from Quartus who had carried it, and flung it at Nicodemus.

"Wrap him up," he said stonily. "He's shivering."

~~Then he led his men up the stairs to the after the raging noise.~~

CRUCIFIXION SEQUENCE

134 A R

It was a day of burning beauty. The buttercups were ^{furiously} yellow ~~which~~ ~~grass~~ down the long slopes from the hills that ringed Jerusalem to the base of the walls. The ~~stones~~ ~~old stones~~ old stones in the walls shone pinkish and where the masons had repaired the ~~wall~~ ~~breach~~ ^{ravages} of time and old wars aged ~~in~~ in mellow half tones the newer bricks ~~of~~ of browns and reddish pink. Atop the walls, the sun struck ~~the~~ ^{FROM} the burnished weapon of the soldiers on duty, was reflected in ~~many~~ ^{EACH} flashes ~~from~~ from the peaks of their helmets ~~each~~ time the men turned their heads. Across the roofs of the city danced the bright sunlight, bounding from domes and ~~settling~~ settling for an instant on ~~the~~ ~~balustrades~~ ^S diving into the streets and peering curiously into the shadows under the awnings. ~~Most of the streets were~~ ^{Most of the streets were} deserted; but in one of the long, narrow lanes that led off the ^{PAL} courtyard ~~a~~ ^{CROWD} had gathered. ~~nearby~~

There were pilgrims and townspeople, men and women and ~~even~~ children, the deep ~~lines~~ lines pressed and flattened ~~the~~ against the walls by the soldiers who kept a way open down the narrow lane. Behind the closed gates of the palace court, ^{had} He hungry ^{BUT} Janus Aurelius marshalled his men, heard the roar of the crowd outside ~~no~~ ^{ed} show on his face. Quartus, big, ~~strong~~ strong, ~~loudmouthed~~ loudmouthed and angry, ~~barked~~ barked the sullen squad into two double lines where they now stood, awaiting further commands. ~~For~~ ^{awhile} Quartus ~~turned~~ wheeled away from the men and saluted his captain. For ~~the~~ ^{STILL} the courtyard was ~~an island of silence~~ and, far away, in the Temple, the gongs of the priests struck the hour.

"It is the eighth hour, Captain," Quartus said, standing immovable as granite his arm upflung in the salute. "All is ready."

Janus had never known such humiliation. The pulses ^{and wrists} at his temples/throbbes painfully against ~~the~~ mail chinstrap ~~and~~ ~~the~~ bronze wristbands floating He was ~~in~~ in a vacuum in which everything was unreal

eyes of Rome and all the provinces where soldiers stood guard over the Empire, the Company of the Ravens under the captain, spectacular fall of the famed ~~Janus Aurelius~~ Janus Aurelius, would be a conversation piece for every barrackroom anecdote, every ~~garrulous~~ garrulous garison^Neer who ever gossiped ~~as he~~ polished a javelin. All within a night.

His Aunt Claudia had saved him the final end --- being sent off to Rome in chains. But fiercely he wished ~~the~~ woman had not been so solicitous over her nephew. ~~It was a greater punishment, living with it, than a greater punishment.~~ would be For he had absolutely no doubt that Pilate would see that his cup be kept filled to the brim. The last time he had seen Pilate, the governor had been beside himself with rage. White and trembling, he ~~had~~ berated the officer, promising that as long as he lived, he would remain in Judea and be in charge of ~~executions~~ executions. And below that, no officer has ever ~~you will never know~~ sunk, Pilate ~~reminded~~ ~~him~~ him.

As if he had not known. As if he did not know that now he was pariah and could not protest even if Guiseppe Zellini ~~refused~~ refused to drink wine with him. He had taken over the job of crucifier from Guiseppe. He had a scarring moment as he thought ~~unbidden~~ ^{ROSE} unbidden that it would make no difference to his career if now he married a Jewess. His face prickled hotly and then went ice cold under a film of sweat.

"Very well," he rasped at Quartus. "Carry on."

The thick waisted cross was dragged from ~~the~~ corner of the court by a couple of menials in the garrison service. At least, they had spared his men the humiliation of that. He eyed the monstrous object and wondered whether the frail Nazarene could carry it. But many of these frail wanderers were surprisingly strong, ~~lean~~ ^{SKINNY FRAME}. A diet of figs and honey and goat's milk could put tough ~~sinews~~ sinews on a ~~Quartus~~ Quartus curtly nodded to the men and they ~~down~~ put down their burden between the ranks of soldiers. Quartus bellowed ~~across~~ across the courtyard and the guards brought out the ~~Nazarene~~ ^{prisoners} prisoners.

Janus could see he had been brutally punished. That was to ~~tax~~ be expected. The Company was not pleased ~~at~~ at being made the pariah Company and they placed the responsibility for it on the prisoner. Because his mind was never far ~~from~~ ^{OFF} Mary, Janus was using Jewish symbols and he likened the Nazarene's beating to the Jewish ~~the~~ ceremony of the Day of Atonement. His squad had the man from Nazareth, the scapegoat heaped their bad luck on ~~him~~ and would lead ~~him~~ out into the wilderness. Outside the city wall where they held executions. Curiously, at close range, Janus inspected the prisoner; ~~the~~ the itinerant Teacher for whom Mary and so many of the Jews had been willing to risk their reputations and worse. ~~That was the end~~

The Nazarene did not look on him. His eyes were on the cross where it lay on the ground. Rough-hewn timber with the axe marks of ~~the~~ careless gouging splintering the edges. He wore his hair long, ~~framing~~ framing a hauntingly serene face. Pale but at peace. He had been terribly scourged. Some savage jester had made a crown of thorns and rammed ^{it} down on his brow. Fresh streaks of blood still bubbled like pinpricks on his forehead.

The Nazarene raised his eyes from his survey of the cross. They met those of Janus. The Roman had expected the eyes to be hate-filled, or frightened, or, at least, accusing. They were, instead, ~~composed~~ composed. The prisoner had obviously been brutalised by the soldiers, yet he somehow seemed ~~tranquil~~ tranquil. Janus had the most peculiar feeling that the eyes of the ~~wandering~~ wandering Jewish prophet were conveying understanding. It was as if this man on his way to ~~the~~ ^a cross sought to comfort him. To reassure him by his cloudless/~~countenance~~ countenance that Janus worried needlessly. And this was of course absurd. How could this stranger know of his affairs? The whole thing was preposterous. In his heightened sense of danger and political peril, he was imagining that a desert preacher possessed supernatural powers. Continue along this road, ~~and you end up placing the one-god alongside your better Roman gods.~~ ^{heretic} Janus, and you end up placing the ~~one-god~~ ^{heretic} alongside your better Roman gods.

He looked around at his men. The squad ~~looked back~~ looked back, puzzled at his long silence. He opened his mouth for another rasped command. He cleared his throat ~~instead~~ instead.

"Can you carry --- that?" he asked the Nazarene quietly.

The Nazarene stooped, his whip-tattered garment ~~dragging~~ dragging in the mud. He fitted his shoulder to the cross, bore it up off the ground and rose slowly, the thing

with him. Janus breathed a sigh of relief. He did not want problems so early in the ugly affair.

"Squad, forward," Janus said ~~tonelessly~~ tonelessly.

---S P A C E ---

The ~~way~~ way out of the city was ~~one~~ ^{OVER} one of the ~~many~~ ^{LESSER} streets in which the pavement stones ~~were torn~~ ^{UP OR} were torn ~~loose~~ loose. The men could hardly keep step, what with the ~~rough~~ ^{ROAD} and the crowd. ~~and the~~ ^{QUARTUS}

"Get them back! Get them back!" Quartus ~~bellowed~~ ^{of the CROWD} bellowed incessantly as the line of soldiers guarding the way ~~sagged~~ ^{in places} sagged under the pressure. The whips of the soldiers cracked and flailed on either side ^{CLEARING A PASSAGE. THRICE THE}. ~~PRISONER~~ ^{and} ~~had stumbled~~ ^{SENT} straightened ~~as~~ ^{AS} the whips turned from ~~the edge of the crowd~~ ^{WORKING} and ~~their~~ ^{SENT} tongues at him.

Janus ~~was~~ ^{MARCHED} at the head of the ~~column~~ ^{COLUMN,} ~~fixed~~ ^{AHEAD.} his face stony and eyes fixed straight ~~ahead~~. Once the procession had passed some weeping women, better dressed than the general rabble, and his eyes had veered to see if Mary ^{Mark} was among them. But she was not. He had waited impatiently while the Nazarene, struggling under the burden, ~~paused~~ ^{ed} to speak to them. He had not interfered when one of the women had wiped the Nazarene's face. ~~Ironically~~ Ironically, he thought if Max Seneca was somewhere watching, he could be reported for this. But then he remembered that Pilate had commented that he could sink no lower. He wished it was over and done with. ^{yelping} Their was a ~~roar~~ ^{BEHIND HIM,} from the crowd, ~~and~~ ^{QUARTUS} bellow for the squad to halt. ~~Janus~~ Janus turned sharply, impatiently, his bleak eyes searching. It was as he feared. The Nazarene was weakening ^{fast.}

This
reans
common
0" and
6".

know that he was within his rights to impress someone to help carry the cross. Old crucifixion watchers in the crowd ^{who knew what was coming} began sidling away. A strange anger came upon Janus.

You sick citizens of Jerusalem, I have been made one of you by my illustrious uncle the Governor! Condemned to be among you ~~for~~ for life! You took ~~green~~ green branches and strewed his path into your city less than a week ago! Now you yell for his crucifixion! You have no will of your own! Only the will of your priests, and of monsters such as my uncle! The only man among you now carries a cross! I will not ~~desire any further~~ sink him any lower by giving his cross to be borne by you!

the crowd ^{STUDY}
His eyes searched for a stranger. He must ~~learn~~ how to exert Roman rule in the provinces, since it was now ~~his~~ his life's career. His uncle the governor, large, urbane, careful of his position as proconsul never to offend Caesar. What was it Pilate had quoted yesterday? He liked to quote some recent poet named Vergil.

"Remember, Roman, to rule the people under law, to establish the way of peace, to battle down the haughty and to spare the meek, ^{these} ~~these~~ are our fine arts."

Very well. A crucifixion was ^{NOT} exactly exercising a fine art but there was a portion ^{OF THE POET} he could ^{USE} ~~use~~ to practice the peace ^{OF} ~~of~~ Rome. He could spare the meek. He searched the crowd for a stranger.

~~His eyes searched~~
The calm, dark-skinned, intellectual face and quiet dress, proclaimed the man a Cyrenian, perhaps one of the Greek scholars in to observe the religious rites of the Jews. Janus pointed his officer's staff at him and a couple of soldiers closed in about the man. The Cyrenian ~~came~~ walked eagerly forward. Quartus raised his eyebrows at the stranger's eagerness.

"Pick it up," he said tonelessly.

— SPACE —

"I'll bet you were afraid," a ~~bearded~~ Committeeman said.

"And I say I was not!" John Mark cried.

The Committeeman was his own height and weight and John Mark thought he could take him. He felt very able today.

"Our little rooster has grown his spurs, Dan," Saul said, a full ~~head~~ ^{staring up the rising ground.} head taller than the rest of his Committee, "He has a right to crow. ~~Why~~ Why, he is even enjoying it out here today with us." ^{AT GOLGOTHA}

John Mark gulped nervously. He did not follow the direction of Saul's eyes. The three crosses were too plainly etched against the darkening sky.

"Where are ^{HIS} ~~the~~ fishermen, young Mark?" Saul asked, ^{"HIDING UNDER A ROCK?"} ~~and~~ ^{only}.

Mark swallowed again, felt hot and confused. He pulled the blue linen cloak away from his shoulders. ^{"IT IS GOING TO THUNDER," SAID DAN, LOOKING AT THE} "Oh --- look!" ^{SAID WITH} Saul ~~quicker~~ quickened ~~his~~ interest. "Look -- the soldiers are going to use the spear!" ^{away} John Mark whirled and ~~ran~~ ran ~~as fast~~ as fast as he could.

LOWERING SKY.

A wind stole into the room, ^{WINDOW} coming in around the ends of the heavy curtain, ~~the~~ ^{A SOFT-WALKING WIND THAT} ~~fluttered the roses~~ ^{FLUTTERED THE ROSES} ~~in the bowl on the carved Egyptian table~~ ^{OVER} ~~in the far corner, and then tiptoed around the room bent double,~~ ^{CAUTIOUS AS BEN LEGION CROSSING A FORECOURT,} ~~and finally slipped under the couches and the ottomans and Mary never knew what became of it afterwards.~~ ^{WHEN SHE SMILED AT THE ^{SILLY} THOUGHT, SHE RESEMBLED JOHN. SHE SHOOK HER HEAD DOUBTFULLY AS SHE SPOKE.}

"You say we are safe now, Demmy?"

Nicodemus nodded. His face was gloomy. "Annas was ~~not~~ ^{SATAN'S} pleased with me. Was ~~not~~ pleased at all. I had ~~my~~ ^{own} time. But I suppose since he had the Nazarene, it attoned somewhat."

"He was the sacrificial lamb, eh Demmy?" Mary asked, smiling still.

"I suppose, ^{if I} overlook your blasphemy, you may call it that."

^{He have merely chipped the tablets, as John Mark would say. He, Quartus,} "Quartus called him that. ^{came in to see me after the} afterwards. He wanted me

to know he wasn't angry at us that his - boss - had been — kicked down the ladder, he said. He said he made his boss stand aside while he — " she swallowed " — drove the nails. Said he hadn't minded, for he knew that this meant Johnny was safe. He had liked the little runt — that's what he calls my son. And then he said 'The fellow wasn't tough at all. I thought he would kick but he went like a lamb ^{to the cross} — like your lambs at the sacrifice.'

"Stop it, Mary!" Nicodemus said loudly. "No use brooding over it.!"

"But I am not brooding, Demmy," she said, looking up at him. "In fact, I feel ^{Stet} strangely — free!"

"Free? ~~Nicodemus~~ Did he have such a hold on you?"

Her eyebrows went up. "Hold? I dont know. Was it a — hold? I am not certain."

Nicodemus settled back on the couch and his long fingers trailed relaxedly along the cushions. "Talk to me, Mary. I want to know, to help you."

She smiled again. "You know you dont fool me, Demmy." ^{Now it's the lawyer's uppermost}

He dropped the pose and looked at her alertly, curiously. "Mary, why had you never taken an interest in politics, or religion, before the coming of this Nazarene? What cure for all the world's ills did he offer? O, I know they said at the trial that he had said he was/

son of God. But what was his politics? Was he ^a/nationalist as the Zealots? A compromiser as the Herodians? What?"

She answered him quickly. "All I know is that he was born into the clean-limbed, clear-eyed, brutal human race and they killed him!"

"I know he was human," Nicodemus said dryly.

"Yes," she said bitterly. "The same knees and knuckles, the same ~~breasts~~ ^{mouth} and noses."

~~He would be a happier human family if he had no nose.~~

"THE ROMANS SAY WE ARE A

nation of ~~empty~~ noses," he said in an attempt at raillery.

"No. A nation of empty ears and mouths full of ^{SHAM} righteousness."

"Now, Mary," he said, cautiously.

She got up and walked across the room, stood for a moment staring at the wall and returned towards him, smiling contritely. "No, Demmy, I am not quarrelling. Forgive me if I appeared to be picking on you."

She sat down and took up the shawl which had fallen from her shoulders when she rose and ran it through her fingers.

"What did he say?" she asked in a low voice.

"Who?" he answered, too quickly.

She looked at him levelly so their glances locked. He shrugged.

"I could not hear. I wasn't near enough."

"The ^{same}/safe, old breed," she said quietly.

did

"Good Lord, Mary, ~~why~~ you expect me to stand at the foot of the cross?" he ~~protested~~.

~~He said~~ "I did what I could. I asked Janus to be as merciful as he could — to — to use the spear as soon as he lawfully could!"

She shuddered and put her hands to her face. He waited for her to be steady again.

He asked in a quieter voice: ^{"WHERE IS JANUS? IS HE COMING?"}

He - he ~~has~~ has asked me to marry ^{him.}

She turned her head away. "I - I think so."

He said lamely, "It may not last, you know."

- SPACE -

He had got awake several minutes before. The quiet in the room was ^{FAT}

~~all~~ all around him and it was as if he was sinking into it. He liked the sinking feeling and how weariness marched down his limbs and out ~~at~~ ^{the} at his fingertips and ~~the~~

the
the feel of ~~the~~ muscles at the back of his neck ^{as they sought} ~~softness~~ softness in the pillows.
A wind blew into ~~the~~ ^{DRAPERIES} ~~the~~ at the window and ballooned the ~~curtains~~ ^{into the}
~~room and he could see that~~ Outside, the day was browning ~~up~~. Soon his mother would be
^{NIGHT-LATCH} in to ~~lock~~ the windows. He guessed he wouldn't want to see her when she came in. He
wouldn't want to see her tearful. He threw his head around and burrowed his face
violently into the pillows.

But there was no removing it. His mind sat stubbornly with the thing he did not
want to remember and he threw himself on his back again and gazed sombrely up at the
ceiling.

It must be over by now. ~~He had been out there before, the day he had some more~~
~~system, proper money, and he knew it was over now.~~ They took them down before now.
Those who had watched, such as the family and the soldiers, would be coming back into
the city now. They would be smelling of dust and heat and rubbing the back of their
^{GOLGOTHA} necks with the end of their robes to get the dirt and the sweat off. And the soldiers
would be marching back into Antonia, marching with dead ~~steps~~ now, not lively as
they had gone out. ^{BUT} ~~and~~ they would be noisy in the taverns tonight. ~~The~~ The friends of
the dead would not be noisy. They would be mumbling the psalms ^{FROM DRY MOUTHS} ~~and their lips~~
as they mortared up the sepulchre. The women would be there. But he
did not think the ^{poor little apostles} ~~disciples~~ would be there. They ^{were NOW} ~~would be~~ quarries ^{like}
he had been. He wished he had taken the ^{TIME} ~~time~~ to teach ^{THEM} ~~them~~ how to run and be
a very good ^{GUARRY.} ~~quarry~~. ^{He} ~~He~~ ^{had} ~~had~~ ^{to} ~~to~~ ^{learn} ~~learn~~ ^{how to} ~~how to~~ ^{run} ~~run~~.
The poor little ^{country} ~~city~~ fellows did not know the city. Not one of them was
from Jerusalem.

They could not lay down in soft beds as he could. Nor go to school tomorrow with everything again in place as he could. Ah, not tomorrow. He had almost forgotten. Tomorrow was Passover. A day of long prayers and dull duties. But maybe not altogether. He knew of some rocks less than a Sabbath day's journey up the Sinai road. He would persuade Cousin Demmy. Cousin Demmy might not mind going less than a Sabbath day's journey on Passover if he told him there were some coneys among the rocks.

But then,
~~tomorrow~~ day-after-tomorrow. Day-after-tomorrow he could look forward to being a king. A king when he faced Saul and looked him up and down and said, Could you have taken the Wall as I did?

And Saul, a worm seeking a place to burrow into, but you giving him no quarter, but following him close and asking down your nose, Could you?
Could you have taken the Wall as me? Could you —?

He shook his head guiltily. No.

No. Not now. Must not think of that now. Should be remembering my friends and being sorry for them. No soft beds like mine. Especially poor Judas. Judas is doubly a Quarry.

He hoped Judas had got away. That even now he was on his way to the far border country of Tyre and Sidon. There was some talk he ~~had~~ had overheard, that Judas was a traitor. He hoped it was not true. Judas was very good with coneys and a smart man in the wilderness. He could see Judas going now as he and the others had gone the last time. Tall, ~~striding~~ striding up the Bethany road and then turning to look back and waving at him just ~~check on whether used Mark at "suffer little etc"~~ before he disappeared over the hump of Olivet. And all the others turning too to wave back at him as he had stood bareheaded on the viaduct outside the city, and Judas and big Siomn bellowing it so the echoes returned:

"So long, Cox! See you next Spring!"

And then turning to follow the Nazarene down the other side of Olivet.

He must remember them now, one by one. And then he could put them out of his mind and think of Saul.

He would think of them one by ~~one~~ one. It was a duty. He wished he had made time to teach them how to run. How to elude the priests, the temple ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ police and the Roman soldiers. First, he would think of Judas.

---SPACE---

Poor little Judas. But he will get ~~is~~ away from them. Judas is smart. I wonder what ~~is~~ ^{is} poor little Judas doing now?

---SPACE---

Father,

Judas Ishcariot said, turning his agonised eyes up to the darker loom of rope he had fashioned above his head,

Forgive them, for they know ^{not} what made me do it.

*** ---SPACE---

And I must think of poor little James Thunder. I wonder if Jimmy Thunder has got over the time when the Nazarene made them catch so much fish, the net split? Jimmy Thunder said he did not know whether to give thanks for the fish or swear over the net! Good thing they hadn't needed the net anymore, him, ~~and~~ ^{his brother John,} and ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Peter.

---SPACE---

And I must think of his brother, poor little ~~John~~ ^{John}, ruled by that hungry-looking lady who, Judas told me, once caused such a ^{JAMES and JOHN,} ~~fuss~~ ^{JOHNNY THUNDER} when she asked the Nazarene to make her sons ^{his chief} ministers when he came to power. I wonder if ~~he~~ ^{is} is still talking big?

---SPACE---

John ~~THUNDER~~, huddled in a corner of the room where they had taken refuge, stared blindly at the wall.

The Master had not forgotten. Even up there, on the cross, torn and bleeding from nail and spear, he ~~hadn't forgotten~~ ^{for gave} ^{our} weakness ~~and~~ ^{By GIVING}

~~his own~~ mother ^{to our charge,}

Son, behold thy mother ...

---SPACE---

John Mark pulled the covers from his head. ~~and~~ He was thinking of Peter. [Poor little Simon Peter who named me the Cox.

Simon Peter had returned to Gethsamane. Now he crouched at the foot of a gnarled olive tree, his back to the Jerusalem lights. He felt-the-sebs-rising-again was shaken with sobs. He had ^{denied} his Master. How was he different from Judas who had, at least, the courage of his ~~CONVICTIONS~~ AND AT THE TRIAL, NOT ONE OF THE TWELVE FOR ~~TRUE WITNESSES~~ TO A ~~GUILTLESS~~ MAN. He lifted his powerful oar-hardened fists.

"My God! My strength!" he cried hoarsely, "why have you forsaken me!"

-- SPACE --

He was getting drowsy again. ~~But he had~~ It was the warm bath and the rub his mother had given him with her/ ~~olive berry~~ nice-smelling olive berry ~~oils~~ oils. / ~~Thomas spoke~~ But he had thickly others to think about. ~~shed~~ ~~Rever~~ ~~garden~~ ~~olive-berry-oils~~

LIKE POOR

Then there was poor little Thomas with his jokes. Heavy stuff. But I like him for he ~~was~~ tells you what he thinks.

--SPACE --

Thomas spoke thickly to the huddled back of Peter. A moon-cloud ~~shed~~ shed a ghostly light in the rock-shadowed garden. ~~Anger~~ and agony ~~was~~ was / ~~in his voice~~ in his voice.

we remembered that For once he

"He said, I thirst, and we looked the other way. ~~because~~ ~~men~~ fed five thousand and then ~~six~~ four thousand, ~~and it was~~ ^{now} unbelievable that he should ENTREAT for a drink. ~~So we looked the other way when they~~ gave him the vinegar ^{new} ~~or~~ ^{new} ~~we needed~~ ^{evidence} ~~that~~ he was the son of God."

--SPACE 0--

And then ~~was~~ there was poor little Matthew, a sharp one, but still a village fellow. Not used to ~~the~~ ~~city~~

big city ways at all. Where would he go?

---SPACE---

underline
Matthew rubbed his nose with the back of his hand and shrugged. Tomorrow the roads would be clear. There was nothing to wait for in Jerusalem. Perhaps elsewhere. But not here. It was finished.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
It is finished.

The Rabbi had said it.

He had a friend in ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Phillipi who hired hands for the Customs there. It could be arranged. He would wait awhile of course to see what the others would do. Especially old Philip.

---SPACE---

And of course there is poor little Philip. ~~He~~ ^{DI} liked Philip. ~~XXXX~~
~~XXXXXX~~ Philip was always willing to talk. ~~Philip was one of those who had not~~ *He had*

--SPACE--

underline
The cough was really ~~in good fettle~~ ^{IN GOOD FETTER}. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ It racked him and creased his chest with fire. But he was not afraid of it. He was ready. He had been ready since he left ^{the} ~~XXXXXXXX~~ ^{house} charnel/~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ the Jerusalem savages called the place of skulls.

"Into thy hands," Philip murmured, remembering. He tightened his arms over his chest and waited for the paroxysm to pass. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," he said to whatever there was.

---SPACE ---

John Mark ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ closed his eyes ~~and thought~~
to ~~re~~/recall the names of the others.

"And there is poor little Andrew, and Bartholomew, and Thaddeus, ~~and~~ and the other Simon, the Zealot like ~~XXXX~~ Judas but a quiet man, and the other James, Alphaeus, ^{HAVE} *wherever they fled to,*

"There, now, I have thought of them all."

He heard footsteps approaching ^H and he/closed his eyes. Under the

lashes he saw his mother come in, Janus with her. He heard quiet ~~s~~ whispers and feigned sleep. He had to see Quartus tomorrow. He had to thank Quartus for allowing him to walk home on his own two feet ^{RATHER THAN} ~~and not~~ letting ^{HIM BE CARRIED BY} ~~the soldiers carry~~

~~him.~~

He ~~heard~~ ^{listened to} his mother and Janus go out again. They had ^{were} ~~been~~ talking about ^{HIM} ~~how she had been~~ ^{ON} the Wall. ~~He felt the stiffness~~ ^{He pulled out his lips} ~~leave his lips and he broke into a grin.~~

How FINE AND BRAVE
MACCABEES
AND a little ~~MACCABEES~~
he had been on the Wall.
He breathed ~~deeply~~ in deeply
and swelled his chest and
~~hummed the Hallel~~
Then let it out again ②

End
Selah