

A Murder Mystery: The Stage Play

Who were the murderers of Jesus of Nazereth?

Written by Cozy M. Janowiec

13 Parts, 9 girls and 4 boys:

Detective Haley

Detective Jason

Emily/Woman Claiming Murder

Mary

Martha

Lazarus

Pontius Pilot

Sophia/Pontius Pilot's Wife

Kelly/Servant Girl

Peter

Joy/Jew#1

Abigail/Jew#2

Ellie/Jew#3

(Opt.) Simon Peter, Mary Magdalene, Marlene, Joanna, Leah, Pearl,

Carrie and Sarah

different scenes:

Scene one: In the office

Parts: Detective Haley, Detective Jason and Emily (W.C.M)

Desk on stage with lamp and stack of books. Detective Haley standing in the middle of the stage, Detective Jason sitting at desk with a book in hands, reading.

Detective Haley mysteriously tells the audience: “My name is Haley, Detective Haley, and this is my partner, Detective Jason.” Motions to Detective Jason. Detective Jason puts the book on desk and waves to the crowd, then goes back to reading.

Detective Haley: “It was a perfect day for a mystery, me and my partner were at our desks, just as busy as we always were this time of year.”

Detective Jason putting book down and talking to audience: “Yes, it was a cold, wet, rainy day at the office; just the kind of day- for a *murder*.” accents ‘murder’ mysteriously. “We are the Detectives of Crime Murder Mysteries and Anything Else You Can Think of Agency.”

Detective Haley sighs: “He came up with the name. My idea was just ‘the Detective Agency’” motions with hands “but he said it wouldn’t draw in business.”

Detective Jason picks the book back up and puts feet up on the desk lazily: “But this way it gets specific. You don’t want people thinking we only take cases on ‘missing cats,’ do you?”

Detective Haley rolls eyes: “Well, it’s not like this place is exactly booming with business.”

Knock at the door, and Detective Haley answers it: “Can I help you, ma’am?”

Emily holding a piece of paper with the agency’s name on it reading it slowly and dragging the name out nervously: “Is this the Detectives of Crime Murder Mysteries and Anything Else You Can Think of Agency?”

Detective Haley: “Yes it is. Come in.” Emily looks around cautiously, looks outside the door then steps into the office, closing the door behind her. Emily walks to the desk where Detective Jason only glances at her and remains in the same position. Detective Haley stands next to desk and Emily stands in front.

Detective Haley: “What can we do for you?”

Emily pauses then says: “I’m here to report... A murder.”

Detective Jason puts feet and book down excitedly: “Really? A real live murder?”

Emily: “I think so,”

Detective Jason stands up excitedly and says quickly: “Do you have facts? Can you tell us the story? What happened exactly?”

Detective Haley shakes head disapprovingly: “Just tell us what happened and why you think there was a murder.”

Emily takes a deep breath: “Well, it started a few weeks ago when I was in church. The preacher had read something out of the Bible, and what he read struck me as something awfully peculiar.”

Detective Haley: "What did he read?"

Emily: "Do you have a Bible on hand?"

Detective Haley: "Sure," bends over and opens the desk drawer and pulls out the Bible, then closes the drawer and hands the book to Emily.

Emily takes the Bible and opens it to Matthew 27:22-26 and reads: "In Matthew 27:22-26 it says, 'Pilate saith unto them, 'what shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?' they all say unto him, 'let Him be crucified!' and the governor said, 'why? What evil hath He done?' But they cried out the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.' Then he answered all the people and said, 'His blood be on us, and our children.' Then he released he Barabas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.'" Emily looks up from Bible: "If they killed an innocent man, wouldn't that be murder?"

Detective Jason: "But who are the ones who murdered him?"

Emily shakes head: "I don't know. That's what I came to find out."

Detective Jason: "We will get on the case. Whoever the murderer was will be found, and punished."

Emily: "Thank you both." Emily exits stage through the door.

Detective Jason sits down with the Bible open, Detective Haley standing next to him reading the Bible.

Detective Haley: "It says in Mark 15:3, 'And the priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing.'" Looks up from the Bible to Detective Jason: "Why didn't he say anything?"

Detective Jason shruggs, and continues to look at the Book: "Look what I found!" points at scripture verse and reads: "John 18:38 says Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.'" Detective Jason looks up at Detective Haley: "If there wasn't any fault in Him, why did they crucify Him?"

Detective Haley: "I think it's time to visit our first witnesses."

Both get up and get things and exit stage out of the door.

End Scene One. Song:

(While the song is going, assigned people will be setting the stage up for scene two.)

Scene Two: The First Eyewitnesses

Parts: Detective Haley, Detective Jason, Mary, Martha and Lazarus

Scene: In the siblings home. Five chairs set up in a half circle facing each other, the chairs have blankets on them to make them look more like couches. Possibly a small table and a lamp/plant.

Everyone is already in seats, Detectives on left and Mary Martha and Lazarus on the right. Detective Jason has a pencil and a notepad in hands.

Detective Jason: "What are your names?"

Mary: "I'm Mary, this is my sister Martha, and my brother Lazarus."

Detective Jason writes names down.

Lazarus: "That's L-a-z-a..."

Detective Jason interrupts him: "I know how to spell," as he finishes writing.

Detective Haley leans over and looks at the paper: "Uhh, you spell Lazarus with a U, not an I."

Detective looks over at Lazarus apologetically: "Sorry," Lazarus slaps palm of hand to forehead.

Detective Haley: "Did you all know the man who was murdered?"

Martha sadly: "Very well."

Detective Jason: "How did you know him?"

Lazarus: "He was a very close friend to us,"

Detective Jason writes something down while Detective Haley asks: "Were you there when your friend was murdered?"

Mary nods and wipes eyes with tissue: "It was the saddest day I've ever lived; almost as sad as when my brother died."

Detective Haley: "I'm so sorry!"

Mary: "That's alright. He's better now. Jesus made him come back from the dead!"

Both detectives look surprised. Detective Jason: "Are you saying that Jesus raised your brother up after he had already died?"

Martha nods happily: "Yes. And he looks more alive than ever!" All look at Lazarus who grins.

Detective Jason to Lazarus: "Wait, you were dead?"

Lazarus smiling: "Yes, for four whole days,"

Detective Jason: "That's kind of... Freaky. And Jesus made you come back to life?"

Lazarus: "Just like he came back to life Himself!"

Detective Haley: "If He is alive, then wouldn't that mean that he wasn't murdered?"

Detective Jason closes notebook and stands up: "I guess that case is solved; nobody murdered Him,"

Martha: "Oh He was murdered alright; we saw it with our own eyes."

Detective Haley to Detective Jason: "Sit down Jason. I don't think this case is over yet."

Detective Jason slowly sinks back in chair.

Detective Haley: "Can you tell us what happened?"

Martha: "It was a terrible day to begin with. When the rest of us had heard that morning that Jesus had been taken by the Jews, we were all very afraid."

Lazarus: "We all knew that the priests and Pharisees didn't like Jesus's teachings, and so we were worried about what was going to happen to Him."

Mary: "Later that day some of us found a big crowd gathered around Pontius Pilate's house. We all slipped in to see what was happening."

Martha: "We watched as Pilate washed his hands on his balcony and said that he was not guilty of "this man's blood," and that's when we saw Jesus."

Lazarus: "His clothes were torn and his hair all tangled; He didn't look like the Jesus I knew; He looked terrible!"

Mary: "Some of the others and I tried pushing our way through the crowd to try and reach Him, but we couldn't."

Martha: "After a while, some of the crowd left, and we could see what was happening. I and many of the others wept when we saw Him."

Lazarus: “His clothes were torn and bloody, so bloody I thought He was going to bleed to death! And on His forehead was a crown; a crown made of thorns.” Mary and Martha start crying at this point. Martha on Lazarus’ shoulder, and Mary in her tissue.)

Mary through her tears: “And on His back was a wooden cross. It made my heart cry to see Him like that.”

Martha: “We followed the crowd as they led Him away. When they came to Golgotha, we watched in silence as they nailed His hands and feet to that wooden cross. I’ve never seen anything so awful in my life!” Moment of silence while Detectives try to imagine it.

Detective Haley: “That sounds horrible,”

Detective Jason: “Then what happened?”

Lazarus: “Then they lifted Him up on that terrible cross and just waited for Him to die.”

Mary: “And the moment He did die, the sky turned black and lightning flashed and thunder roared. I could barely see my hand in front of my face.”

Detective Jason: “Sounds like a murder all right.”

Detective Haley: “Just one last question; do you know who murdered Him?”

Martha: “I think the Romans and Pontius Pilate murdered Jesus.”

End Scene Two. Song:

(While the song is going, assigned people will be setting the stage up for scene two.)

Scene Three: In Pontius Pilate's living room.

Parts: Detective Haley, Detective Jason, Pontius Pilate, Sophia/Pontius Pilate's Wife, and Kelly/Servant Girl.

Scene: In Pontius Pilate's living room. Four chairs with different blankets to look like couches, and a small coffee table in the center with a vase and flowers, and a suit of armor in the background with a sword and helmet.

Detectives standing at the door, Pontius Pilate leads them to chairs and motions for them to sit.

Pontius Pilate: "Please, have a seat." Detectives sit in chairs.

Pontius Pilate: "Is there anything I can get you? Bread? Cheese? Grapes? Meat? We have the finest of everything here; straight from Rome!"

Detective Jason: "I guess I could go for a little something;"

Pontius Pilate claps hands twice and Kelly the servant girl appears: "Servant girl, prepare a feast for our detective guests,"

Kelly: "Right away master." Kelly curtsies and leaves the stage.

Pontius Pilate taking a seat in a chair opposite of detectives: “Now, what is this I hear about someone saying I’m a murderer?”

Detective Haley: “We are trying to solve a murder case, and someone who is an eyewitness of the murder says that you are the murderer.”

Pontius Pilate looks puzzled: “Why would they say that? I’m an honest man. I’ve never murdered a soul!”

Detective Jason: “Well, these people claim that you and the Romans murdered this man, who was innocent.”

Pontius Pilate: “Now listen, I do what the Roman government tells me to do. I’m not responsible for what I do for them.”

Detective Haley: “Well, our witnesses seem to think differently.”

Pontius Pilate: “Maybe if you tell me who was murdered I could tell you more.”

Detective Jason leans forward: “His name was Jesus of Nazareth.”

Pontius Pilate’s face remains blank for three seconds, but then lights up in recognition: “Oh, Him. He’s given me a lot of trouble since I sent Him to Golgotha.”

Detective Haley: “Why is that?”

Pontius Pilate: “After He was crucified, He was put in a tomb and His body disappeared! I had even taken extra precautions for it too. I had put my best guards to guard the tomb.”

Detective Jason: “Why did you need to guard the tomb? All it had was a dead body,”

Pontius Pilate: “the man who died, Jesus, had followers. The jews were afraid that the followers were going to steal Jesus’s body, and say that he had resurrected from the dead. Isn’t that crazy?” Pontius Pilate laughs.

Detective Haley: “Yeah, but what did happen to His body?”

Pontius Pilate motions with hands: “Just what I was afraid of. Gone. The followers must have knocked out my guards, taken the body, then later said that he had risen from the dead.”

Kelly walks back on stage with a platter of food, followed by Sophia (Pontius Pilates’ Wife) carrying plates. As Kelly places food around the table, Pontius Pilate stands up and walks over to Sophia. (Servant girl exits stage).

Pontius Pilate: “I would like you all to meet my wife, Sophia.”

Sophia: “Greetings,”

Detective Jason: “Hi,”

Detective Haley: “Hello it’s very nice to meet you.” Pontius Pilate and Sophia sit down.

Sophia: “What are you two investigating?”

Detective Jason grabs a plate while everyone is talking and starts piling food on it, and he looks *very* hungry.

Detective Haley: “We are trying to find out who murdered a man, you might know him. His name is Jesus of Nazareth.”

Sophia: “Oh, him. I can tell you a thing or two about that man.”

Detective Jason puts food down and takes out notepad and pencil: “That could be helpful.”

Sophia: “I never liked that man; and for several reasons.”

Detective Haley: “What were those?”

Sophia: “I had been having strange dreams about that man for quite a while. When my husband told me about the same man that was in my dreams, I begged him not to deal with Him.”

Pontius Pilate: “Well, you didn’t beg hard enough. And besides, I let the Jews deal with Him. Remember when I washed my hands?”

Sophia: “I didn’t know that you washed your hands! I wasn’t there.”

Pontious Pilate: “The servant girl was though,” claps hands twice and servant girl appears on stage: “Servant girl, come here for a moment. I need you to tell these people something.”

Kelly comes closer: “Yes master?”

Pontius Pilate: “Were you there when I washed my hands for Jesus of Nazareth?”

Kelly: “Yes, sir.”

Sophia bossily: “Well don’t just stand there; tell these people about it!”

Kelly to detectives: “My master, Pontius Pilate, told me to bring a pitcher of water to the balcony, so I did. I poured the water out on his hands as he said, ‘I am innocent of this just man’s blood; see ye to it.’”

Detective Jason to Detective Haley: “If Pontius Pilate didn’t murder Him; then who did?” Pontius Pilate and Sophia look at each other knowingly.

Sophia: “We think the Jews did it.”

End Scene Three. Song:

(While the song is going, assigned people will be setting the stage up for scene four.)

Fourth Scene: Peter and the Jews.

Parts: Detective Haley, Detective Jason, Peter, Joy, Abigail and Ellie.

Scene: Peter and Jews around campfire warming hands.

Jews around the campfire, talking to each other. Detectives enter the stage and walk up to Jews.

Detective Jason to Jews: "We are with the Detectives of Crime Murder Mysteries and Anything Else You Can Think of Agency. We need to ask you folks some questions."

Peter: "What seems to be the problem?"

Detective Haley: "Someone has accused the Jews of murder, and we are here to find the truth."

Ellie: "Who was murdered?"

Detective Jason: "A man named Jesus."

Joy: "We never murdered him."

Abigail: "Didn't you see the news? He rose up from the dead three days later."

Detective Haley: "Well our source says that Jesus's followers stole His body then claimed that he was alive."

Peter shrugs: "Believe whatever your source told you, but that's not true. I saw Jesus ascend into heaven myself."

Detective Haley: "Ok, so he did come back to life."

Ellie: "Yes."

Detective Jason: "So he's alive, but he was still murdered? This murder case doesn't make much sense to me."

Detective Haley: "I think Jesus was still murdered, even though He did come back to life."

Joy: "That's right. Many people watched Him die, and they reported it all, which makes it a legal death."

Peter: "But that still doesn't answer the question, 'who murdered Him?'"

Detective Jason: "We just came from Pontius Pilate's house. He says that you Jews murdered Jesus of Nazareth."

Ellie: "Can you prove it?"

Detective Haley looks around the stage, and spots Bible near the fire: "Can I use that?"

Abigail: "Yes, here you go." Abigail hands the book to Haley.

Detective Haley opens the Bible to Matthew 27:23: "It says so right here in Matthew 27 verse 23; 'And the governor said, 'why? What evil hath he done?' but they cried out the more, saying, 'let him be crucified!'"

Detective Haley looks up at Jews. "We are trying to find out who 'they' are, because whoever 'they' are, are the murderers of Jesus."

Peter: "I think I know who the murderers are."

Detective Jason: "Really? Who?"

Peter: "Open the Bible to 2nd Corinthians 5 verse 21, and then Romans 5 verse 8."

Detective Haley opens the Bible to verses and reads: “2nd Corinthians 5:21 says, ‘For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.’ Detective Haley flips pages: “And Romans 5:8 says, ‘But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.’”

Peter: “Jesus laid down His life to pay the penalty for my sins and your sins.”

Detective Jason: “Than who murdered Him?”

Joy: “I did, you did, we all did. Jesus died because we were sinners. He died for us.”

Detective Haley: “I never thought about it that way. So God planned it all from the beginning?”

Abigail: “Yes. He knew the only way to save us from eternal death from sin, was to send someone to die for us.”

Ellie: “That’s right. It was everyone who murdered Him.”

Peter: “Because of our sin, Jesus died. Even though it was the Romans who physically murdered him,”

Joy: “And the Jews that made the Romans do it,”

Abigail: “They only did it because it was God’s plan.”

Detective Jason to Detective Haley: “Well, I think our case is almost solved.”

Detective Haley: “I think so too. We should go tell our client the news.”
Turns and says to Peter and the Jews: “Thank you all!”

End Scene Four. Song:

(While the song is going, assigned people will be setting the stage up for scene Five.)

Scene Five:

Parts: Detective Haley, Detective Jason, Simon Peter, Mary Magdalene, Marlene, Joanna, Leah, Pearl, Carrie, Sarah, Andrew, and Thomas.

Scene: In the detective's office.

Detective Haley sitting at the desk, writing in a notebook. Detective Jason reading the Bible.

Detective Jason: “One thing doesn’t make sense to me,”

Detective Haley looks up: “What’s that?”

Detective Jason: “All of the people we’ve talked to said that he had risen from the dead, but none of them were there to witness the event.”

Detective Haley thoughtfully: “That is true. We may have gotten a little bit ahead of ourselves,”

Detective Jason: “Here in Luke 24:1-3 it says, ‘Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which she had prepared and certain other women with her. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, and they entered in, and found not the body of Jesus.’”

Detective Haley: “We need to find out who the women were that went to the tomb,”

Detective Jason setting the Bible down: “Already ahead of ya!” Walks over to the door and shouts, “You can come in now!” Jason walks back, followed by Mary Magdalene, Marlene, Joanna and Carrie.

Detective Haley stands up: “Hello, who are you?” Mary Magdalene and Carrie stand on the left side of the desk, and Joanna and Marlene stand on the right side.

Mary Magdalene: “My name is Mary Magdalene, and these are the other women who were with me when Jesus rose from the dead.”

Detective Haley looks over at Detective Jason with surprise and confusion: “How did you-”

Jason crosses arms and says smugly, “I did a little detective work while you were taking that nap.”

Detective Haley to women: “Would you mind telling us about it?”

Mary Magdalene: “Jesus had died three days earlier, and we were all there.”

Carrie nods, "It was a very scary day!"

Marlene: "We went to the tomb to put spices on Jesus, and his body was gone!"

Joanna: "At first we thought it was the Romans, because the big stone had been rolled away."

Mary Magdalene: "We rushed inside, and his clothes were folded neatly on the floor. It puzzled us all, because a dead person doesn't just get up and walk away!"

Marlene: "But Jesus was special. He had told everyone that he would come back to life in three days."

Carrie: "And he did!"

Mary Magdalene: "Then we saw an angel clothed in white who said, 'Don't be frightened. He is not here, he is risen!'"

Joanna: "Then he said, 'go tell his disciples that he is risen!'"

Marlene: "We ran out of there and went and found Simon Peter and told him the good news!"

Detective Haley shakes hands with Mary Magdalene: "You have been very helpful. Thank you for coming," All women walk out of the door.

Detective Haley: "Now we just have to find the people who saw Jesus after he had risen,"

Detective Jason is already walking over to the door. “Again, already ahead of you,” He opens the door and Simon Peter, Leah, Pearl, Sarah, Andrew and Thomas walk through. Detective Jason closes the door and follows them back to the desk. Simon Peter, Pearl and Sarah stand on the right side of the desk, and Thomas, Andrew and Leah stand on the other side.

Detective Haley to Detective Jason: “It must have been a really long nap,”

Jason shruggs, then to Simon Peter: “What did you do when Mary Magdalene told you that Jesus was risen from the dead?”

Simon Peter: “I had to go see for myself!”

Detective Haley: “And what did you find?”

Simon Peter: “Not Jesus, that’s for sure!”

Detective Haley to Andrew: “And when did you see Jesus?”

Andrew motioned to Thomas: “My friend and I were walking on the road to Emmaus, and a stranger started to walk with us.”

Thomas: “He asked us questions about why we were so sad, and we told Him it was because Jesus had just died.”

Andrew: “We invited Him to stay with us for dinner, and when He broke the bread we recognized Him as Jesus!”

Thomas: “We were shocked, and then He just disappeared into thin air!”

Detective Jason: “Wow!”

Detective Haley to Sarah: “And who are you?”

Sarah: “I’m Sarah, and this is Leah and Pearl. We all are cooks and servers for the disciples.”

Detective Jason: “Can you tell us about Jesus?”

Sarah: “We were serving hot rolls and lettuce when all of a sudden, a man that had not been there before, stood in the room!”

Pearl: “Yes, it was the craziest thing I’ve ever seen,”

Leah: “We all recognized Him as Jesus, and he showed us his hands and sides to prove it.”

Sarah: “Then, forty days after that, he ascended into heaven.”

Leah: “He told us that he would be appearing one day to take all of the believers home.”

Pearl: “And we’ve been waiting for him ever since.”

End Scene Five. Song:

Scene Six: Case is Solved.

Parts: Detective Haley, Detective Jason, and Emily.

Scene: Back in the detective's office.

Emily is sitting in a chair by the desk, and detectives enter the stage through the door. Emily stands up when they come in.

Emily: "Did you solve the case?"

Detective Jason proudly: "Yes we did!"

Emily: "Who was the murderer?"

Detective Haley: "The murderer was sin. Because all of us sin and fall short of the glory of God, Jesus let himself be murdered in order to save us all from eternal death and seperation from Him."

Emily happily: "I knew you would solve it!"

Detective Jason grins: "All in a day's work."

Detective Haley: "And if you ever have a mystery that needs to be solved, you know where to find us."

Detective Jason: "Right. We will always be the Detectives of Crime Murder Mysteries and Anything Else You Can Think of Agency."

Emily: "Thank you. I'm going to go tell others that Jesus is alive! Goodbye!" Emily exits stage through the door.

Both detectives stand facing the audience.

