

In the Hole

the untold story of the night before Good Friday

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The play opens with Jesus, his back toward the audience, being faced by Caiaphas and others. This, clearly, is Jesus' trial.

Caiaphas: This man refuses to accept our decision, and to recant his false teachings. What do you say?

The others (*loudly*): He deserves death.

Caiaphas: (*to Jesus*) This is your last chance Nazarene; do you recant your false teachings?

Jesus says nothing.

Caiaphas: (*to the others*) Now he will not even answer us. What do you say?

The others (*loudly*): He deserves death.

Caiaphas: Take him to the hole. We will meet as a body at sunrise and take him to Pilate. You are dismissed.

Most of the others depart the scene.

Jesus is led by Caiaphas and some others to something suggesting "the hole." Jesus is put inside and is no longer visible.

Caiaphas: You, (*gesturing to two or more of the others*) stay outside the door. You, Joseph, you stay here and watch him.

Except for Joseph, the others depart the scene. The lights are turned off.

Joseph sits down facing toward the entrance to the hole, and away from the audience. He lights a lamp and sets it down. (This might illuminate texts of this dialog previously placed where Joseph and Jesus could see them.)

A little time passes.

Joseph: So, you're Jesus of Nazareth.

Silence.

Joseph: I said SO YOU'RE JESUS OF NAZARETH!

Jesus: I am.

Joseph: You know what's going to happen to you.

Jesus: I know what's going to happen to me.

Joseph: So, aren't you scared? (*Joseph asked this without a trace of concern.*)

Jesus: I'm not scared of the outcome, but I do not look forward to the pain.

Joseph: Well, you did it to yourself.

Jesus: I prefer to think that I am doing it for you.

Joseph: What does that mean?

Jesus: Didn't you ever listen to me teach?

Joseph: I heard a few things... how does that answer my question?

Jesus: My mission was to tell you how much our heavenly Father loves you. I am now here in this hole because I would not run from this mission.

Joseph: You should have run. You know what's going to happen to you tomorrow.

Jesus: And if I run, who will believe that the Father loves us, and begs us to love Him back, and to trust Him for whatever will come from it?

Joseph: Trust what? You're dead.

Jesus: I am not going to die... is your name Joseph?

Joseph: Yes... and you ARE going to die.

Jesus: No, Joseph, I am not. My work on earth may be coming to end, but my life with our Father will then begin. This was always my only hope, and it's your only hope too.

Joseph: What does that mean?

Jesus: Do you think, Joseph, that you are going to live here on earth forever? Do you even want to? Don't you notice that you want so much more from life than life here will ever give you? Don't you realize that the Father gave you these hopes because they are going to be fulfilled?

Joseph: This is one of the teachings that got you into trouble. I don't need to hear it.

Jesus: I think you DO need to hear it, Joseph. You need to know the truth about life if you expect to live well. You were made for life with God. You are here only to get ready. Even this is a gift of the Father's love. He is giving you the chance to have something to say about who you will be in His kingdom—the person you will be for-EVER. You need to know this, Joseph, and do with life what life is for while you still can.

Joseph: These are more of your teachings. I go with what I KNOW.

Jesus: What do you know, Joseph? You know that life here ends in death—not just mine but yours too. You know that you've never gotten from life what you really want, and even when you get a little, time takes it away. Surely you know that you come from somewhere. Surely you understand that you are here for a reason. Surely you can see that faith in the Father will make your life whole.

Joseph does not have an answer to this. A few moments past by. Finally,

Jesus: The Father loves you, Joseph. He made you for life with Him. He needs you to know this, and to help Him give you the greatest life that He can give you.

Joseph: Why are you telling me these things? Why do you care about what I “know”?

Jesus: The Father cares about you, Joseph. How can I not?

Joseph: I would think you would hate me. I’m guarding you, you know.

Jesus: In my heart, Joseph, I know that your heart doesn’t want to hurt me. The Father made us for one another. He did not make us for hatred. He knows that living and learning is not easy, and that sometimes we get confused, or it’s just hard to do what’s right. But He looks with love upon our struggles, and He asks us to look at each other in just this same way.

Joseph: And if I spit in your face right now?

Jesus: My Father will forgive you, Joseph, and that means I must try and do the same.... Is there really any other way to live?

Joseph: You can get even.

Jesus: Are you ever really even, Joseph? Doesn’t anger produce more anger? Doesn’t it divide us more and more? How can this be the way if we were made to be God’s family?

Once again Joseph becomes quiet. Finally,

Joseph: Look, I don’t have all the answers but if you try to get away I’ll tell them I couldn’t stop you. Go through the window and those guys at the door might not see you. They’re probably sleeping anyway.

Jesus: And where do I go, Joseph? And what becomes of my mission? And what becomes of our faith that we were made for life with God? Should I die in hiding, or should I die in love?

Once again Joseph becomes quiet. Finally,

Joseph: (*with emotion*) Why would your “father” do this to you?

Jesus: He asked me to do this, Joseph, so that if hard things happen to His other children they will feel less alone.

Joseph: (*still emotional*) Well, why do any of us have to go through things like this?

Jesus: You will understand when you get to the kingdom, Joseph. You will see what we gained for what we suffered. And I promise you, Joseph, you will be glad, you will be SO glad. You will see, Joseph; one day you will be with me in paradise.

Joseph: (*with remorse*) I am your jailer, who was told to keep you here until they kill you.

Jesus: You are a son of my Father, Joseph, and a brother to me. You were made to be beautiful, and my Father and you are bringing this about.... Actually, in just this short time that we are talking, I can already see some of what my Father loves when He looks at you.

Another moment of silence from Joseph. Finally,

Joseph: What can I do to help you?

Jesus: You have already helped me, Joseph, by letting me get to know you. And I do not blame you for what will happen to me tomorrow. But go to my disciples and learn more about the kingdom. Perhaps you will learn enough so that you will be able to teach the truth to others.... You have been a son of encouragement to me, Joseph; I will think of you as "Barnabas."

Just then the others come in. It is just before morning. The lamp is extinguished and a light is turned on.

Caiaphas: (*to the others with reference to Jesus*) Take him.

Jesus is removed from the hole. Before being led away, he is allowed to stop and stand before Joseph. Finally,

Jesus: What is the purpose of your life, young man?

There is no answer.

Caiaphas: Let's go.

The others go but Joseph does not. Once they are gone, and he is alone,

Joseph: Dear God, I am a coward; I am a coward. Forgive me. Give me strength. Lead me where I need to go. Make me more like (*a moment passes*) make more like Jesus, who would have me as his brother. I do not want to die in fear. I do not want to die in fear.

Joseph leaves.