

## CHARACTERS

*L/R from audience perspective*

<i>Theo</i>	<i>off-stage narrator</i>
<i>Thomas (brown bearded man)</i>	<i>left</i>
<i>Hannah (girl)</i>	<i>centre</i>
<i>Peter (black bearded man)</i>	<i>right</i>
<i>King</i>	<i>top</i>
<i>Pharisee (white bearded man)</i>	<i>top</i>
<i>Angel</i>	<i>top</i>
<i>Mary (green woman)</i>	<i>centre</i>

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## *Palm Sunday scenery*

## **HYMN: GIVE ME OIL**

## **SCENE 1: PALM SUNDAY**

*Thomas, Hannah and Peter up*

*Thomas droops head and snores loudly; Hannah giggles.*

**Peter**      What are you laughing at, Hannah?

**Hannah**    It's Uncle Thomas. He's snoring!

*Thomas snores again; Hannah giggles.*

**Hannah**    Shall I wake him up?

**Peter**      No. Let him sleep. He's probably having a nice dream. We'll wake him in a few minutes.

**Hannah**    Ok. Shhhh...

*Hannah and Peter down*

**Theo** Peter was right. Thomas *was* having a nice dream. It was all about an exciting new King, and how he was going to set his people free.

*King up*

**King** Hurray for me! I'm so strong and powerful! The Jewish people have been ruled by the Romans for too long. But I will set them free. I'll raise up an army and kill anyone who gets in my way! And the bravest man in my army will be Thomas ...

*Peter shouts from off-stage:*

**Peter** Thomas! Wake up! It's time to go!

*King down*

*Thomas straightens up.*

*Hannah up*

**Hannah** Come on, Uncle Thomas. We're going to Jerusalem. Hurry up!

*Thomas and Hannah down*

**Theo** So off they went - Thomas and Peter, and Jesus' other friends - all of them heading to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, with Jesus riding on a donkey.

Thousands of people were in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They were remembering when God had saved them from slavery in Egypt. And plenty of them, like Thomas, were hoping that he would set them free again now.

*Thomas, Hannah and Peter up*

**Thomas** Stay close to me, Hannah. This crowd is enormous.

**Peter** And just listen to them, Thomas! All cheering and shouting for Jesus.

**Thomas** And look at them waving palm branches, Peter! It's happening. I think it's really happening at last!

**Hannah** What's happening? I don't understand.

**Peter** Can't you hear what they're shouting, Hannah?

**Hannah** Hosanna to the King! Hosanna to the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

But what does it mean?

**Thomas** It means that Jesus is the King! It means that he's been sent by God to set us free!

**Hannah** Really? Jesus is amazing, Uncle Thomas. I know that. But he doesn't *look* like a King.

**Peter** Don't be silly, Hannah. We've seen his miracles. We know for sure that he's a new King, sent by God to set his people free from these Romans.

**Hannah** But how can he do that? Jesus isn't a soldier. He's riding a donkey, not a war horse.

**Thomas** Don't be silly, Hannah.

**Peter** Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel!

**Thomas** Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

*Pharisee up*

**Pharisee** Hey - Jesus isn't a new King! Jesus, tell your followers to stop saying that.

**Theo** But d'you know what Jesus answered? He looked straight at that Pharisee, and he told him that if his friends kept quiet then the very stones in the road would burst out cheering!

*All down*

## **HYMN: BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES**

*Last Supper scenery*

## **SCENE 2: THE LAST SUPPER**

**Theo** By the end of the week, things had got a bit quieter. Nobody paid any attention when Jesus and his friends gathered together, upstairs in a friend's house, to celebrate the Passover meal. Nobody guessed what a special time together that would be. Nobody guessed that it would be Jesus' very last supper with his friends.

*Thomas, Hannah and Peter up*

**Peter** I can hardly wait to see what Jesus does next. To have come here to Jerusalem, at Passover time - surely he's planning something big.

**Thomas** And we're going to be part of it! Even if I have to die with him, I'll follow wherever he leads.

**Hannah** Uncle Thomas, I don't understand.

**Thomas** What is it, Hannah?

**Hannah** Well, you say that you'll follow wherever he leads. You say that Jesus is your leader. So why is he behaving like a servant?

**Thomas** Don't be silly, Hannah. Jesus isn't a servant.

**Hannah** So why is he washing everyone's feet? That's a servant's job. It's disgusting. Our feet are all dirty from the road. And why did he tell us to wash each other's feet? Yuk!

**Peter** You heard what he said. He served us and now he wants us to copy him and serve other people. To love them and look after them, just like he does.

**Hannah** But then he said that one of you would betray him. That makes no sense. I thought you're his best friends.

**Thomas** And so we are. I know that I'll never doubt him.

**Hannah** How can you be so sure, Uncle Thomas?

**Thomas** Don't be silly, Hannah. I would never doubt Jesus.

**Peter** And I'll tell you one thing for sure: even if everyone else lets him down, I'll never leave him.

**Theo** They all thought that. They all thought they'd found their king and he was going to win a great victory and they'd be really important in his new kingdom. They never stopped to think that

before a victory there must be a battle. They never stopped to wonder if they were brave enough to fight for him.

**Hannah** There's something else I don't understand. Every Passover we eat the bread and drink the wine, to remember how God saved us from slavery in Egypt. But Jesus said that from now on the bread and the wine will help us to remember *him*. What does he mean?

**Thomas** I think it's a promise: a promise that he'll save us. Just like God saved our people so long ago. Jesus is going to save us again.

**Hannah** I still don't understand. How is he going to save us? When he broke the bread just now, he said that his body is going to be broken, too. Is Jesus going to die?

**Peter** Don't be silly, Hannah. Of course not. Jesus won't have to die. You'll see.

*All down*

**Theo** But poor Hannah was still very worried. The problem was, she hadn't listened to *everything* that Jesus said. She hadn't listened when Jesus told them that they could always trust him, no matter what happens. "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid," is what he said. "I give you my peace."

**HYMN: PEACE, PERFECT PEACE**

*Good Friday scenery*

### SCENE 3: GOOD FRIDAY

**Theo** Only a day had passed since Jesus' friends had their last supper together. But what a terrible day it had been. By the time Peter and Thomas found each other again that evening, they were both feeling very sad and sorry indeed.

*Thomas and Peter up*

**Peter** Leave me alone. I can't believe what I've done. Leave me alone!

**Thomas** It's not just you, Peter. We all let Jesus down.

**Peter** But I said that I wouldn't. I promised him! And then ... then I couldn't even stay awake when he asked us to pray for him last night. And when he was arrested, I couldn't even admit that I knew him. Oh, I'm such a failure. I can't believe what's happened. How can Jesus be dead?

**Thomas** I know, Peter. But he really is dead. You saw what happened. They laughed at him and they hit him and then they hung him on a cross and he died.

**Theo** It was true. That huge crowd filling Jerusalem - the crowd that had shouted Hosanna when they thought Jesus was coming to set them free from the Romans - they'd shouted something different in the end. When, at last, they understood that he hadn't come to fight the Romans. When they saw his poor, beaten body held up between the guards. No, they weren't shouting Hosanna any more. They were shouting for him to be crucified. Release

Barabbas, they said - because he might really lead us in our fight against the Romans. As for this Jesus, what can he possibly do? Why, he can't even save himself, never mind the rest of us.

**Thomas** 'King of the Jews', the notice above his cross said. I really thought that's what he was.

**Peter** But now he's dead. How can I ever forgive myself?

*Thomas and Peter down*

**Theo** None of them had been listening. Jesus had told them what was going to happen. He'd told them that he must die - and he'd promised them that he would rise again. He'd promised them that he would always be with them. He'd promised that they could always trust him, no matter what happens. They just needed to be strong and courageous, and remember everything that he had commanded them.

**SONG: WE MUST BE STRONG AND BE COURAGEOUS**

*Easter Sunday scenery*

**SCENE 4: EASTER SUNDAY**

**Theo** If we stay close by God's side then we never need to feel afraid. But Jesus' friends hadn't learned that lesson yet. They didn't begin to understand until the third day after he had died, when Mary went to look at the place where his body had been laid: a

tomb, like a cave, with a huge stone rolled across the entrance, and guards making sure nobody disturbed it. Well, they tried anyway. But they hadn't reckoned on an angel of the Lord moving the stone.

*Mary & Angel up*

**Mary** Where's Jesus? Oh, what have you done with his body?

**Angel** Why are you looking for him in a tomb? Why would you look among the dead for someone who's alive? Jesus isn't here. He has risen, just as he said he would. Look where his body was. You can see it's not here.

**Mary** But where is he?

**Angel** He's alive! Now go and tell his friends. Quickly - go!

**SONG: WHY DO YOU LOOK HERE FOR THE LIVING?**

*Mary & Angel down*

*Thomas and Peter up*

**Peter** I keep thinking about all the things Jesus said when he was alive. You know, he told us that he would die, but I wouldn't listen. I didn't want to believe it.

**Thomas** And he told us he'd rise again. But that's impossible.

*Mary up*

**Mary** Peter, come quickly! Jesus is alive!

**Thomas** Alive? How can he be alive? We saw him die.

**Mary** I went to the tomb. His body's gone. And an angel of the Lord told me that he's alive.

**Thomas** But that's impossible.

**Peter** Jesus alive? Can it really be true? And if it is - oh - how could I face him, after what I did?

*All down*

**Theo** Peter still didn't get it. He didn't get what Jesus had done for him on the cross - and not just for him but for all of us. You can't blame him. I mean, the truth is amazing. That God loves us, even though we keep messing up. That he loves us so much that he won't let anything get in the way of us knowing him. That he loves us so much that he would even come to earth and let himself be killed on a cross, so that when we mess up all we need to do is say sorry, and really mean it, and we can be friends with him again. It blows your mind, doesn't it?

**HYMN: I KNOW JESUS LOVES ME**

*House scenery*

**SCENE 5: THOMAS**

*Thomas, Hannah and Peter up*

**Peter** I'm so full of joy! I want to dance and sing! Jesus is alive!

**Thomas** So you say.

**Hannah** But he is, Uncle Thomas! Mary's seen him, and Peter, and ever so many people.

**Thomas** Don't be silly, Hannah. You don't understand. Jesus is dead. And dead people don't come back to life.

**Peter** But, Thomas, it's true. I've seen him myself.

**Thomas** Well, until I see the nail scars in his hands and touch them with my finger, I won't believe it.

**Hannah** Can't you trust Jesus without seeing him, Uncle Thomas?

**Thomas** Don't be silly, Hannah.

*Thomas, Hannah and Peter down*

**Theo** Jesus alive? Thomas needed to see it to believe it - and that's just what happened. A week later, when Jesus' friends were gathered together, he came to them again. This time, Thomas was with them. And Jesus said to him, "Put your finger here, Thomas. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

*Thomas, Hannah and Peter up*

**Thomas** Jesus is alive! I've seen him for myself! I've seen the scars and I've touched them with my own hands. He is my Lord and my God!

**Peter** Yes, it's really true. God came to earth. We saw him with our own eyes. We ate with him. We listened to him - and then, when things got tough, we turned our backs on him. *I* ran away from him. And he died on a cross, all alone.

**Theo** There was a sign over the cross. It said, 'King of the Jews'.

**Hannah** But it was wrong. Jesus isn't the king of the Jews.

**Thomas** Don't be silly, Hannah. Of course he is.

**Hannah** Ok - but he's not *just* the king of the Jews. He's King of everyone and everywhere.

**Peter** Hannah's right. That man who hung on the cross was the King of kings. He could have saved himself, but he didn't. He chose to save all of us, instead.

**Thomas** And afterwards, when he rose again, we saw him again with our own eyes. We ate with him again.

**Hannah** And this time, we really listened. We listened when he told us that he's saved us.

**Peter** *I* listened, when he told me that he forgave me for messing up.

**Thomas** And *I* listened, when he told me that it's time to start trusting him.

**Theo** Sing Hosanna to the King of Kings! The kingdom, the power and the glory are his, now and forever.  
Let's say together the prayer that he taught us.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*All down*

## **HYMN: LORD OF THE DANCE**

## **THE BLESSING**