

I SAW HIM

by Emily Pardue



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CUP

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

CAIAPHAS' HOUSE

WHIP

ROBE

CROWN OF THORNS

STONE PAVEMENT

GOLGOTHA

TOMB

CROSS

ANGEL 1

ANGEL 2

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis: Inanimate objects tell what they saw and felt during the events leading up to the Crucifixion. The roles may be played by males or females.

Playing Time: About 25 minutes.

Props: Candles (ten). If desired, props suggestive of the various inanimate objects may be held by the characters: Cup — pottery chalice, Caiaphas' House — drawing of a wealthy person's biblical house, Garden of Gethsemane — leafy tree branch, Whip — a stick with a length of leather attached, Robe — a purple biblical robe, Crown of Thorns — grapevine wreath, Stone Pavement — large flat rock, Golgotha — clod of dirt with grass, Cross — crude wooden cross, Tomb — big stone.

Costumes: The characters should dress in black, e.g. capes, robes, turtlenecks with pants, etc. The angels should wear light-colored clothing (no wings or halos).

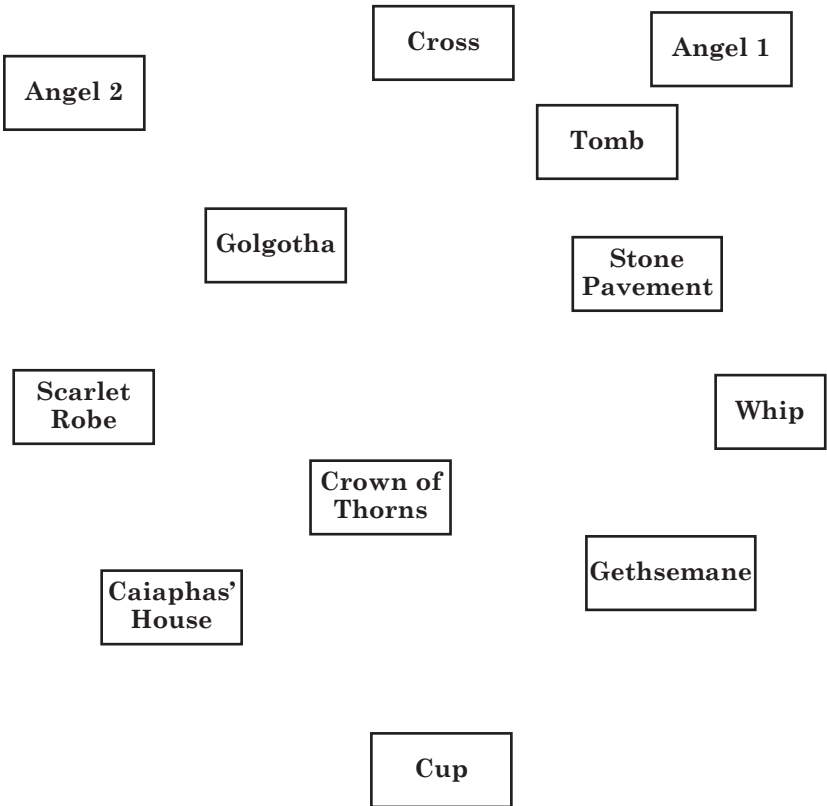
Lights: Dim or turn off the house lights for the candlelit processional of the characters. If your church has theatrical lighting, a spotlight on the individual characters as they deliver their mini-monologs adds impact to the presentation.

Music: Any solemn hymn from the Lenten section of your hymnal will be suitable for the processional of the characters. Any joyous, upbeat hymn from the Easter section will work as the closing congregational number.

Sound Effects: Strike a hammer on metal for the “ringing hammer” effect in the processional.

SUGGESTED STAGING

The characters are to make their part as real and as full as they can in their small space. They should not move outside of a leg span of their designated spot.



(The sanctuary lights are dimmed or turned off. ANGELS 1 and 2 are in place, preferably in the choir loft or some other higher location. It is best if they are not seen until it is their turn to speak. The other CHARACTERS enter from the rear of the sanctuary or from the side in the order in which they speak: CUP, GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, CAIAPHAS' HOUSE, WHIP, ROBE, CROWN OF THORNS, STONE PAVEMENT, GOLGOTHA, TOMB, CROSS. [TOMB speaks last, but the CROSS is the last to enter.] All hold lit candles.)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *(Sung by the CHARACTERS as they walk in.)* "Ah, Holy Jesus," "Were You There?" or any solemn Lenten hymn.

(The hammer begins to ring as all take their places and the hymn ends. When the CROSS is in place, they all blow out their candles on the fourth ring of the hammer and turn so their backs are to the audience. The hammer rings three more times.)

CUP: *(Turns around and speaks somberly.)* **That evening, I ... I couldn't get a feel for what was really happening. Jesus and his disciples shared a close fellowship, but that night everything seemed to change. He took me, the cup, in his hands. *(Gestures with hands.)* I felt an overwhelming sense of apprehension, yet a challenge. Then he gave thanks. Why, he called the bread they ate his body and the wine they drank his blood. It didn't make sense to me! *(Pauses, thinks.)* Then he said that somebody at that table would betray him. Well, that was too much, even for me. I had seen him with them before. He really loved them. Who would want to betray him? They were all so close. *(CUP freezes.)***

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE: *(Turns to face audience and speaks in a gossipy, busybody manner.)* **What did I see? I've seen a lot of things in my Garden of Gethsemane, but this incident will haunt me forever. I saw Jesus enter with two of his disciples, James and John. Then he left those two and went on a little farther, where he began**

1 talking to his father. I thought it a little strange, for I
 2 didn't see anyone, but he kept calling on his father.
 3 (*Shakes head.*) He cried! (*Slowly, with emphasis*) He cried.
 4 This man was hurting, and I ached for him. He was
 5 weighed down by a heavy burden that he couldn't
 6 unload. His friends didn't help — they kept falling
 7 asleep. He cried out again.

8 (*Pauses.*) His sweat was like drops of blood, and it
 9 puddled on my ground. My rock that he leaned on was
 10 soaked. When he finished praying and went to his
 11 friends, a crowd came. Then one fellow stepped away
 12 from the crowd and kissed him on the cheek. I tell
 13 you — it was mad! One of Jesus' friends even pulled his
 14 sword and cut the ear off one of the leaders of the
 15 group! (*Slowly*) Then they took him away. There was so
 16 much confusion! And my garden is usually such a
 17 peaceful place. What a night! (*GARDEN OF*
 18 *GETHSEMANE freezes.*)

19 CAIAPHAS' HOUSE: (*Turns to audience and speaks indignantly.*)

20 What nonsense! It had been a quiet evening here at
 21 Caiaphas' House until they brought that man, Jesus,
 22 here. The utter blasphemy of it all! Of course the Jewish
 23 council convened here and was correct in all its ways.
 24 The high priest, being the just man that he is, listened
 25 to the testimonies from the Sanhedrin. (*Bolder*) They
 26 had proven information against Jesus! The high priest
 27 gave him a chance to defend himself, but he said
 28 absolutely nothing. He didn't even answer the high
 29 priest. How arrogant! How disrespectful! Then the high
 30 priest asked him if he was the Christ, the Son of the
 31 Blessed One. (*Throws hands up.*) That man actually
 32 answered that he was the Christ! Can you believe that?
 33 (*Crosses arms.*) Well, I tell you ... Anyone who would be so
 34 bold as to make a statement like that could never be
 35 King of the Jews! Indeed! (*CAIAPHAS' HOUSE freezes.*)

WHIP: (*Turns around and speaks, confused.*) There was so much confusion on that day. Pilate had seen Jesus already. You could tell that Pilate was really troubled by him and the crowd that had gathered. Pilate tried to appease them by saying that he would punish that man. (*Proudly*) That would have been my job, the whip. Hey, it would have been forty lashes at the most. But the people wouldn't hear of it. They demanded that the man be crucified!

Then it was my turn. It's not that I like my job, but it's what I do. I whip people. (*Pauses, slower.*) When my three prongs sliced his back, blood gushed. I hit him again. He began going down. (*Apologetically*) I kept on striking him. I had no control over the flogger who used me. It was then I understood that the flogger and I were both being used. He was being used to vent the frustrations of the high council. I was being used to vent his frustrations. But what could I do? Hey, it's a job. (*The WHIP freezes.*)

ROBE: (*Turns around and speaks arrogantly.*) A robe as fine as I am isn't for everyone. You have to be someone to wear it. Not just anyone can dress in purple, you know. The color of royalty. I mean, it just doesn't look good on everyone. You must have a certain oomph to wear it. (*Indignantly*) Imagine that! The soldiers brought me, the scarlet robe, to aid in their ridicule of him. How absurd! Imagine using me for something so petty. (*More compassion*) But when they draped me on his bloody back, I knew that I was too heavy for him. He even staggered under my weight. I tried to keep my weight off of him. What else could I do? And the blood! I felt it seep through my fibers. I wondered how I would ever get clean again. (*The ROBE freezes.*)

CROWN OF THORNS: (*Turns around and speaks.*) While all the commotion was going on, I was being braided into a

1 circular piece of some sort. Now, anyone that knows me
 2 knows that my thorns are the longest and the strongest
 3 of the thorn family. (*Proudly*) My thorns do not bend. We
 4 are a sturdy breed. (*Slower*) Then they planted me on
 5 that man's head! What was I being used for? It made no
 6 sense to me. My fingers of thorns sank into his head,
 7 and blood gushed! (*Changes to a more somber tone.*) When I
 8 felt his skull, I knew this man was in pain, and I was the
 9 cause of it. He closed his eyes and groaned from my
 10 stinging. (*Lowers head and freezes.*)

11 **STONE PAVEMENT:** (*Turns around and speaks.*) I heard them
 12 coming. I didn't know what to believe. There was so
 13 much going on that day. Pilate wanted to set Jesus free,
 14 but the people insisted that if he did, he was no friend
 15 of Caesar's. You know politics. Pilate became disgusted
 16 with it all, and he brought the man here. They call me
 17 Gabbatha! I am the stone pavement. (*Uses hand to*
 18 *describe.*) I am part of the Tower of Antonia that borders
 19 the northwest corner of the temple complex. I have a
 20 beautiful view of the courtyard below. And on all
 21 special events, I am the main seat. "Here is your king!"
 22 Pilate told them.

23 Well ... I listened to what the crowd below demanded
 24 of Pilate. (*With emphasis*) "Crucify him! Take him away!"
 25 the people began shouting. Even the chief priest
 26 bellowed. (*Louder*) "Crucify him!" (*Pause*) I don't know
 27 what Jesus was accused of, but he lost. Pilate finally
 28 gave in. And the man, he just stood there quietly. I don't
 29 know. It's really not my place to say. I just bear the load
 30 of all the traffic. (*STONE PAVEMENT freezes.*)

31 **GOLGOTHA:** (*Turns around and speaks proudly.*) "The Skull."
 32 That's what they call me. When we need to show the
 33 people who's boss, I'm the one. I'm where it all ends ...
 34 *Golgotha!* As they came up my hill, I watched in pride.
 35 Three that day! I had not held three crucifixions in

quite a while. I was attracting so much attention. This was my day to be known! But when the one in the middle died, everything changed. It got so dark that it looked like the blackest night. The stars ran, the moon hid! I shook so uncontrollably that my trees came loose. Animals fled, people fell, rocks broke, and tombs split open. Never have I witnessed such upheaval. What a day! My time of recognition turned into a chaotic nightmare. (*GOLGOTHA freezes.*)

CROSS: (*Turns around and speaks.*) Jesus fell under my weight. The soldiers ordered another man to carry me for him — perhaps so they could beat him easier. At the top of Golgotha, they laid me on the ground. They pushed him to the ground and laid him on me. He winced when his raw back touched me. He cried out in pain as they hammered a spike through his hand into me. He cried out in pain! His flesh fused with my wood as the spike drove through him and then me. Then they hammered another spike into his other hand. Then they placed one of his feet on top of the other. A soldier then hammered still another spike down through both of his feet. (*Groan*) Why? (*Nervously*) They shoved me into the hole to stand us up. My weight sunk into the ground. His skin ripped as his weight fell on the spikes. His bloody back slid down as my splinters gripped his flesh and shredded what was left of his skin. His blood mixed with my oils. He cried out as we both hung there together.

As we became one, I knew that I was all Jesus had left. Then he called out to his father. (*Shakes head.*) I didn't see his father — just a few friends and his mother at my foot. Then the man commended his Spirit to his father. I didn't understand that. But I did understand when he said, "It is finished." And then he died. I felt so close to him during that short time. Later, the soldiers



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