

CLAUDIA, WIFE OF PONTIUS PILATE

A Dramatic Monolog

by
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(Claudia tried to save Jesus from the cross and was made a saint by the Greek Orthodox Church.)

Notes On the Story of St. Claudia: This monolog is based on an old manuscript found in a monastery at Bruges, where it had lain for centuries. It is a letter from Claudia, wife of Pontius Pilate, to a friend in Rome. It was written after Pilate and Claudia had been sent into exile. When Madame Maintenon became consort to Louis XIV of France, she had this letter read aloud every Good Friday before the court assembled at Versailles. In some of the older communities of Europe, its reading follows the washing of feet of the poor on Good Friday, in remembrance of Christ washing the feet of His disciples. A copy of the original letter was found among the private papers of the late Czarina of Russia, and was given by her in trust to a friend to keep until the Czarina's expected return from the fateful last journey to Tsarshoe-Selo.

The scene is a crude room in the Gaelic mountains.

It is not pleasant here in this little Gaelic mountain town where Pontius Pilate and I have been driven. The people about us know of the shame which has descended upon us. Even here, in this place of exile, the children on the street slink away from me, and when I pass, the women draw their veils closer.

Oh, I hope that some day the women of the world will understand even as the mother of Jesus understood that I, wife of Pontius Pilate, tried to save the Christ from the cross.

My father was a rich, aristocratic merchant of Greece. I spent my childhood in Narborne, Greece. I was scarcely fifteen years old when a marriage was arranged for me with Pontius Pilate. I had never seen him before the marriage feast because my parents had planned the marriage. Pilate admired my beauty and he esteemed my wealth for he was very ambitious. He always said that he was a philosopher, seeking the truth. He would often say to me, "Claudia, love is a weakness, fit only for women." So he paid little heed to me.

After we were married five years, I became a mother. Then I seemed to have new joy in my life. We had a little boy we called Pilo. He was a beautiful child and had a smile so bright that the very slaves looked up when he passed. But Pilo was born with a withered foot. I know that Pilate loved our child but he always seemed ashamed of a son who could never be a soldier.

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