

# A CROWN OF THORNS

A Dramatic Reading

by  
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Jonas, the hunchbacked wood gatherer of Jerusalem was poking about the thorny burnet bushes for dry branches. The women liked the burnet wood because its flame was hot for cooking. It was past noon and unless he hurried, he would not be able to sell the wood before night fell.

Grumbling to himself, he filled the panniers on the back of his patient old mule and led him down the hillside. But when he approached the road from Jericho, he saw that a crowd jammed it for more than a mile.

“Hosanna!” the crowd shouted as it marched along. “Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.” Those at the front were cutting palm leaves and dropping them in the dusty road before the leader. Jonas decided that he was not like the ordinary prophets who came to Jerusalem at Passover time. This man’s face had a gentle majesty about it, like a king in the robes of a commoner.

Jonas called to one of the followers to ask the prophet’s name.

“He is Jesus of Nazareth,” the man replied. “Surely you have heard of him, even here in Jerusalem.”

As Jonas had feared, it was dark before he could get into the city. Grumbling to himself, he led his mule to his mud-walled hovel and lifted the baskets from the patient animal’s back.

Zadok, the leper, whose mud hut adjoined that of Jonas, was late in getting home. “You should have been begging today, hunchback. The pickings were good. There was much excitement in the city. The Nazarene prophet, Jesus, has come to Jerusalem.”

“I saw him on the road. His followers kept me from getting through the gates until almost dark.”

“What did you think of this one called Jesus of Nazareth?”

Jonas shrugged. “Another prophet, though better behaved than most.”

“Better? Then you don’t know what happened. He overturned the tables of the money-changers in the temple, and drove out the sellers of doves.”

“But the priests--”

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