

PILATE'S LAST LETTER

A Dramatic Reading

by

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(The time is the period between the crucifixion of Christ and Pilate's suicide. The scene is a darkened room in the home of Pilate, Governor of Judea. A small candle flickers as Pilate sits slumped at his desk. He rises and reads aloud his final message to his wife.)

My dear Wife:

Forgive me, my darling, for what I am about to do. I can go on no longer. The shame of this death cannot possibly be greater than the shame I brought to you in life.

How I wish I had taken more time with you in those first happy days of our marriage, but I was intent on one goal—the governorship. All else yielded to this driving passion. I believe you shared my joy, living in the palace and basking in the honor of those first successful years. To think that my entire career, indeed my very life, is forfeited because of a Galilean Jew!

It was so early in the morning they brought Him to me. (How can one think clearly in the morning?) Gladly would I have refused to see those troublesome Jews had not the law required my presence. They were always bringing someone before me for some trifling offense. I sensed, however, that this Man was different. He evidenced no fear, just patiently stood before me, His eyes searching my innermost thoughts. Believe me, dear, I didn't want to judge Him even then!

I asked that they judge Him according to the Jewish law, but they wanted my courts for a death penalty! I could tell the priests were envious of His power and wanted Him out of the way. I knew it was wrong. I knew there was no fault in the Man and kept telling them so.

Why, oh why, did I ever call Him aside for that private interview? I suppose it was my natural curiosity about His claim to Kingship of the Jews; but the statements He made concerning His Kingdom made me deathly afraid. He said His Kingdom was not of this world, that if it had been of this world his servants would fight. My courage seemed to wane in the prospect of this supernatural situation and an eerie feeling grasped my heart. I was afraid to be His enemy. I was afraid to be His friend.

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