

The first witness: It's over now. The crowds have all gone home. The soldiers are gone. Well, most of them. There a few hanging around. A couple of them are so drunk they can't get up. The centurion on his horse surveying the site. The guards posted by the tomb. And me.

The two thieves are just about dead. So close that their taunters and even their families have left. One little boy just threw a rock at the head of the one on the left and scared away a vulture, but the thief didn't move.

The only ones here are with the one in the middle. The one who died so early. The one they called the King of the Jews. The Centurion on the horse is keeping his distance, but it is clear that these are the ones he's interested in. I wonder what he's afraid of. There's only a woman, probably his mother, a young man and a young woman, brother and sister or friends, perhaps.

This should have been like any other. These things are not uncommon. The condemned walk up the hill, they're stripped, pushed around, nailed to the cross beam, hoisted up and left to suffocate or get eaten by birds of prey or wolves. No different with this one, really. He died a little more quickly, but then again, he'd been nearly flayed alive. And the crowd was bigger. But the nails went in.

Funny thing though. I can't get the sound of those nails out of my head. Boem, boem, boem. Metal on metal. Metal piercing wood. I've wielded this hammer many times and the sound has never bothered me before. And of all the things. When we got him lifted up, he looked down at me and said, "Father forgive them". He asked his god to forgive me. The hammer just slipped out of my hands.

They've just taken his body down and put it in his mother's arms. I wonder if she'd forgive me, too.

The second witness: Those stupid fools. I told them to make this so-called prophet's punishment sever, but not like this. This is just savage. Sometimes I just don't understand my men. Of course, right now, I don't understand a lot of things. We probably put an end to an uprising. Maybe saved the peace. So why am I so uneasy? Why do I feel that we have done something terribly wrong? Why am I drawn to this grieving woman and her friends?

I keep circling nearer and nearer to her. Hoping perhaps to have her look at me, maybe even to speak to me. Maybe me speaking to her.

Maybe all I can do now is to allow them some dignity. I'll order those guards to help take down the body and to act with unaccustomed courtesy in dealing with the family.

I have just been handed a scroll from Pilate. This man is to be entombed in the tomb of a man named Joseph not far from here. That's good. These men can guard it. I'll help, on my horse, to roll the stone back. (And at the same time, make sure the body goes where it's supposed to).

The tomb is sealed. The thieves bodies have been removed and thrown into the lime pit. The prophet's family has left. It's time to leave the this place to the night animals and the guard and go home. It has been a long and confusing day.

The third witness: I'd seen Jesus around town a few times. I'd heard him speak. I liked what I heard. I dint understand some of it. But mostly, he spoke about a God that loved us no matter if we were poor or imperfect. I like that. Well, I'd been arrested for stealing and

roughing somebody up pretty bad. A Roman no less. I saw them bring in Jesus. I tell you, I thought he was dead already. His skin had been nearly ripped off. You could see muscles and even bone in some places. Then they tied our crosses on us and led us away.

As we wound our way through the city, I could see Jesus falling and being pushed around. Finally they got some poor guy from the crowd to help. He was none to happy at the first.

When we got to the top of the hill, I was the first to get nailed and raised up. I can't begin to tell you how bad this hurts. First is the pain of the nails in the wrists and feet. When your arms get tired, you start to sag and have trouble breathing so you have to push up on the nails in your feet and that hurts like mad.

Well, then they raised the other guy, a real jerk. Then Jesus. The other guy starts yelling at Jesus so I tell him to shut up. We deserve what we get, Jesus doesn't. I ask Jesus to remember me when he gets to his Kingdom. Jesus says that I will be with him in paradise today. Man I really started crying then.

Man it's getting harder to breath. I just looked over, and I think he's about to go. He's just said that it's finished and something about commending his spirit. Oh God they're coming to break our legs so we can't push up and we'll die faster. Oh God.

Can't breath. Jesus. I can see Jesus. I can

The Last witness: The tomb is sealed. The night is dark. The cries of death and mourning have faded into memory. Only the stillness of a pure absence of anything, an absence of everything. A vacuum of existence. A vacuum of life, light, grace, goodness.

I smell the stench of victory in the air. The enemy put up a good fight this day but my weapons were too powerful. Good people failing to act is a powerful tool in my bag of tricks. Apathy is a wonderful drug. Oh, the usuals all work well, sex, greed drugs, alcohol, racism,. But I tell you, mix a little fear in with anything and you have a great motivator.

Genius, even if I say so myself. Everybody can blame somebody else. The Jewish crowds can blame the priests, the priests the Romans, the Romans can blame the priests. Truth be told, if any of them had stood up to me, it would have been over. But no. Only the twelve, make that eleven and the women and the loose band of followers. Even they didn't want to be counted at the end. They all ran away, except his mother, she could prove to be a problem, a woman or two and a disciple. Hardly a mighty army of white robed martyrs. Only the dregs of an abandoned failure.

Remember this day, Oh Israel for this is the day that Satan killed your King. Remember Oh God for this is the Night that Satan killed your Son. Remember and Weep. For the tomb is shut and the son of God is Dead and gone.