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Dramatic Publishing



The Robe of the Galilean

An Easter Play in One Act

by

JOHN McGREEVEY

Based on Scenes from

"THE ROBE"

by

LLOYD C. DOUGLAS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(THE ROBE OF THE GALILEAN)

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The Robe of the Galilean

An Easter Play in One Act

FOR FIVE MEN AND FIVE WOMEN

CHARACTERS

SARAH

MARTHA

STEPHANOS

RHODA

JOANNA

DEMETRIUS

MARCELLUS

ESTHER

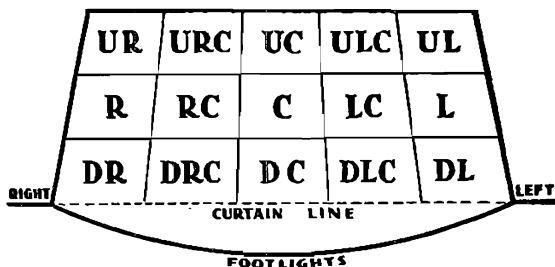
CENTURION

SIMON PETER

PLACE: *A room in a weaver's shop in Jerusalem.*

TIME: *One year after the Crucifixion.*

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Curtain over doorway R, long work table, smaller table and stool, upturned tub, bench, loom (optional), pieces of cloth, yarn, etc.

DEMETRIUS: Small pack (containing graceful pitcher).

MARCELLUS: Small sack (containing the homespun Robe).

CENTURION: Sword.

SIMON: Shepherd's crook.

The Robe of the Galilean

SCENE: *A room in a weaver's shop in Jerusalem. The door to the street is U C. An opening at R stage is covered with a curtain and leads to Sarah's living quarters. There is a long work table D R. At D L stage is a smaller table with a stool near it. An upturned tub is at L C stage. A bench is against the wall U L C. If practical, a loom stands just to the right of the door U C. Various pieces of cloth, yarn and other evidences of the weaver's trade are here and there about the stage.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is an evening, one year after the Crucifixion. The room is dimly lit and deserted. There is a low rumble of thunder, and shortly after that an agitated knocking on the street door U C. SARAH, a small woman of great age, appears through the curtained opening R. She moves with evident apprehension to the door U C and opens it. MARTHA hurries in and SARAH closes the door after her. MARTHA is an attractive woman in her forties. She is breathless at the moment.]*

MARTHA [*clutching SARAH'S arm*]. Sarah—have the Romans come here?

SARAH. Not tonight. [*Two women come D C.*] I've heard them in the street, but they haven't stopped.

MARTHA [*breaking from SARAH and moving D L, hand to her face*]. They're arresting everyone.

SARAH. Who now?

MARTHA. Reuben—Jesse—Cleopas—I don't know how many others. [*Sinks onto tub at L C.*] It's the end, Sarah. [*Buries her face in her hands.*] The end! [*Sobs softly.*]

SARAH [*moving to MARTHA's side*]. That's what the Romans thought a year ago—when they crucified Him.

MARTHA [*looking up at SARAH*]. Why do they persecute us? We do them no harm.

SARAH. They're afraid, Martha.

MARTHA. Afraid? Of a handful of men and women who ask only to be left alone?

SARAH. It's not us the Romans fear. It's what we believe—what He taught.

MARTHA. But His way is the way of peace.

SARAH [*nodding*]. Peace and love. [*Moves to c.*] The Romans can't understand that, Martha; and what the Romans can't understand, they fear; and what they fear, they destroy.

MARTHA. I've heard they will crucify all who call themselves Christians.

SARAH [*facing MARTHA, kindly*]. And do *you* fear death?

MARTHA [*rising and moving shakily toward SARAH*]. I know the Master taught that to die in His name is to live. . . .

SARAH. To lose your life for Him is to gain paradise.

MARTHA [*in tears*]. But I'm weak, Sarah. If—if they tortured me, I might forget Him. . . .

SARAH [*taking MARTHA's hands*]. Martha—we're all weak without Him. Have you forgotten that even Simon Peter three times denied he knew the Master? Still, Jesus forgave him.

MARTHA. If Simon were with us . . .

SARAH [*nodding sadly*]. The Romans knew we all leaned on Simon's strength. That's why he was the first to be arrested.

MARTHA. If they crucify Simon, who will lead us?

SARAH [*sighing, turning and moving D R*]. I don't know. Perhaps Stephanos.

MARTHA. He's young.

SARAH. But he is strong—like Simon. He's coming here tonight.

MARTHA [*taking a step toward her*]. Is that wise?

SARAH. He wants some of us to meet that young Roman who just returned from Galilee.

MARTHA. The one who traveled with Justus?

SARAH [*nodding*]. Marcellus Gallio.

MARTHA [*going to SARAH D R, apprehensively*]. To ask a Roman here—in this time of trouble . . .

SARAH. Stephanos feels he can be trusted. [*Looks at MARTHA.*]

He even hopes Marcellus Gallio may become one of us.

MARTHA. One of us? [*There is a light knocking on door U C. Both women look at each other in fear, but SARAH moves up and opens the door U C.*]

[STEPHANOS, RHODA and JOANNA enter U C, and SARAH closes the door. STEPHANOS is an energetic young man in his twenties with a refined and sensitive face. RHODA is an attractive, rather intense girl in her late teens. JOANNA is a woman in her thirties. She has an air of quiet spirituality. RHODA moves quickly D L.]

RHODA. The Romans are everywhere!

SARAH [*to STEPHANOS*]. Do you think you were followed, Stephanos?

STEPHANOS [*taking SARAH'S arm and moving to R C*]. I don't think so. Demetrius and Marcellus Gallio haven't come?

SARAH. Not yet.

JOANNA [*moving to L C*]. Perhaps the young Roman has decided it's wiser not to be seen with Christians!

STEPHANOS. They'll be here, Joanna. I'm certain of that.

MARTHA [*still D R*]. Good evening, Stephanos.

STEPHANOS [*crossing down to MARTHA*]. Martha—it is good to see you!

MARTHA [*as he takes her hand*]. I ran here like a frightened child to be comforted.

STEPHANOS [*softly*]. In these times, our best comfort is in Him.

SARAH. Is there any word of our Simon Peter?

STEPHANOS [*moving toward SARAH, shaking his head*]. They've hidden him in the lowest tier of the prison. Escape there is impossible. We can only wait and pray.

RHODA [*sitting on stool D L*]. Why did the Master let this happen to Simon?

STEPHANOS [*gently*]. Perhaps to test us, Rhoda.

JOANNA. A year ago, we sat in this room weeping because we had laid our Master in the tomb.

STEPHANOS. Yes, Joanna.

JOANNA. We thought all hope had died on the cross at Golgotha—but we learned that wonderful morning we were wrong.

STEPHANOS [*nodding*]. Perhaps this imprisonment of Simon Peter is to teach us another lesson. [*To SARAH.*] There's been no time for us to eat, Sarah. Would you have a little bread—some broth?

SARAH. Of course! [*Crosses toward curtained opening R.*] Why didn't you say at once that you were hungry?

JOANNA [*crossing R after SARAH*]. Let me help you.

SARAH. There's little to do—but I'll be glad of company, Joanna. [*JOANNA goes out R. MARTHA is still D R. SARAH, in opening R, sees that RHODA and STEPHANOS would like to be alone.*] Martha—Joanna and I have more need of you than Stephanos and Rhoda. [*Smiles.*]

MARTHA [*flustered*]. Stephanos and Rhoda? Oh—of course! [*Moves to opening R.*] Forgive me! [*She and SARAH go out R.*]

STEPHANOS [*laughing*]. Nothing escapes Sarah. [*Moves to RHODA.*] Even in this time of trouble, she knew I would like a moment with my wife-to-be.

RHODA [*rising*]. It seems we're never together. [*They embrace.*]

STEPHANOS [*kissing her tenderly on forehead*]. Poor little Rhoda.

RHODA [*looking up at him*]. Don't feel sorry for me. There's no woman in Jerusalem as lucky as I am.

STEPHANOS [*holding her out from him, his hands on her arms*]. I had hoped that Simon Peter would marry us long before this.

RHODA. Now, he's in prison. And if they could find you . . .

STEPHANOS. Don't be afraid, Rhoda.

RHODA [*in his arms again*]. Not for myself, Stephanos. Only for you.

STEPHANOS [*as they part*]. We're in His care. There's no reason to worry. [*There is a light knock on door U C.*

STEPHANOS *moves to answer it.* RHODA *moves D R.*] This must be Demetrius and Marcellus. [*STEPHANOS opens the door U C and DEMETRIUS steps quickly in. He is tall, broad-shouldered, lithe. There is a deep sensitivity in his rugged face. He is in his twenties. He carries a small pack.*] Demetrius! Where's Marcellus Gallio?

DEMETRIUS. We thought it best to come separately.

STEPHANOS [*nodding*]. A wise precaution.

DEMETRIUS. All the Christians who worked at the Inn where we stay were arrested tonight, Stephanos.

STEPHANOS [*sighing and nodding as they come D C*]. It is the same all over the city, my friend. The Romans feared we might plan some demonstration on this first anniversary of the Master's crucifixion.

RHODA [*D R*]. Welcome, Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS [*crossing to RHODA*]. Rhoda! It's good to see you again!

RHODA [*smiling*]. Your travels in Galilee have agreed with you.

DEMETRIUS. I thought when I returned that you and Stephanos would be married.

RHODA. So did I.

DEMETRIUS [*putting his pack down on long table*]. I even brought you a small gift. [*Produces a graceful pitcher.*] A pitcher—made by Hariph—the potter of Cana. [*Hands it to RHODA.*]

RHODA. Oh, Demetrius! Thank you! [*Examines it.*] It's lovely.

STEPHANOS [*laughing*]. So—we have our first wedding present, Rhoda! We must set the date soon!

RHODA [*moving to curtained opening R*]. I want Sarah to see this. [*As she goes out R.*] Look at the lovely pitcher Demetrius has given us. . . .

[STEPHANOS *and* DEMETRIUS *laugh*. STEPHANOS *moves toward* DEMETRIUS.]

STEPHANOS. I've missed you.

DEMETRIUS. You were often in my thoughts while my master and I were away.

STEPHANOS. You still call Marcellus Gallio "master"?

DEMETRIUS [*crossing to L C*]. He's offered me my freedom, Stephanos, but for now, I remain his slave.

STEPHANOS. He is accepted among us only because of you.

DEMETRIUS. He's come a great distance in his understanding of the Galilean.

STEPHANOS. Understanding is important, Demetrius—but Faith and Love are even more vital to a man who would follow my Master.

DEMETRIUS [*sitting on tub L C*]. Marcellus feels that Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived. But he can't accept the fact that He came back to us from death.

STEPHANOS [*thoughtfully*]. There—understanding stops and faith and love begin. [*Moves toward DEMETRIUS.*] Does he still have the Robe?

DEMETRIUS [*nodding*]. He carries it with him always.

STEPHANOS [*with tinge of excitement*]. Then he brings it here tonight?

DEMETRIUS. I thought you'd like to see it again.

STEPHANOS [*turning from DEMETRIUS and moving to R C*]. I would. When we're so troubled and shaken, just the sight of His Robe will give us new courage. [*There is a knocking on door U C.*]

DEMETRIUS [*rising, moving D L*]. This will be my master. . . .

[STEPHANOS *moves quickly to the door U C and opens it*. MARCELLUS GALLIO *comes in and* STEPHANOS *closes the door*. MARCELLUS *is a handsome young Roman in his twenties. He is not as tall as Demetrius, but well-proportioned. His dark hair is closely cropped and his face is strong and sensitive.*]