

TONY
HARRISON

The Mysteries



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faber and faber
LONDON · BOSTON

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 3

If any ask after us,
Call them to Calvary.

(*Music. SIMON circles the pit once carrying the cross, followed by KNIGHTS and JESUS.*)

SIMON puts down the cross and exits.

KNIGHTS put the cross into position facing upstage with its foot downstage.

KNIGHT 4 three bricks, throws one to KNIGHT 2 who places it under the foot of the cross. KNIGHT 3 puts a brick under the right arm of the cross, and KNIGHT 4 under the left arm.)

The Crucifixion

KNIGHT 1

Sir knights, take heed and hither hie
This fastenin' up falls to us four.
Ye wot yourselves as well as I
How lords and leaders of our law
Have given doom this do't'll die.

(KNIGHT 4 who, throughout the scene, is the eagerest to get on with the job goes to the toolbags for a length of rope.)

KNIGHT 2

Ay we heard all that afore
But now we're come to Calvary

(KNIGHT 2 looks at KNIGHT 3, who is something of the butt of the group.)

Muck in 'n' moan no more.

KNIGHT 3

Moaning, nay I know I'm not
So, sirs, let all make speed.

(KNIGHT 4 throws the end of the length of rope to the right arm of the cross.)

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 4

Just you work out whose job is what
And we shall do this deed.

(KNIGHT 4 moves to the toolbags for a second length of rope.)

KNIGHT 1

(*Moving to toolbags*)

We must start, sirs and that right soon
If we shall any wages win.

KNIGHT 2

(*Moving to toolbags*)

He must be dead, needs must, by noon.

KNIGHT 3

(*Moving to toolbags*)

Then it is good time that we begin.

KNIGHT 4

(*Taking the length of rope*)

Let's ding him down! Then he is done.
He shall not daunt us with his din.

KNIGHT 1

T'lad needs lesson, learn him one
wi' care to him and all his kin.

KNIGHT 2

This lad his life shall loss
In the worst of woeful ways.

KNIGHT 3

That means, put him up on t'cross.

(KNIGHTS 1, 2, 4 stare at KNIGHT 3.)

KNIGHT 4

'ark at what the smart lad says.

KNIGHT 1

Then to this work us, must tek heed,
So that our working be not wrong.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 2

None other note to name is need
But let us haste him for to hang.

KNIGHT 3

And I've gone for gear, good speed
Both hammers and nails large an' long.

KNIGHT 4

Then may we boldly do this deed
Come on, let's kill this traitor strong.

KNIGHT 1

This lad's like not to be t'last
We'll rivet to t'rough rood.

KNIGHT 2

And we'll fasten him full fast
And wedge this wight to t'wood.

KNIGHT 3

Since ilka thing is right arrayed
The wiselier now work may we.

KNIGHT 4

The cross on t'ground is goodly spread
And bored even as it ought to be.

KNIGHT 1

Look that the lad on length be laid,
And made be tied unto this tree.

KNIGHT 2

For all his brag he shall be brayed:

(Turning to crowd/audience)

Stay stood there and you shall see.

KNIGHT 3

(To JESUS)

Thou cursèd cur, come forth
Thy comfort soon shall cool.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 4

(To JESUS)
Win the wages thou art worth.

KNIGHT 1

(To JESUS)
Walk on! Now work we well!

JESUS

Almighty God, my Father free
Let these matters be marked in mind
Thou bade that I should buxsome be
For Adam's plight I must be pined.
Here to death I do pledge me
Saving mankind that has sinned
And sovereignly beseech I thee
That they through me may favour find.
And from the fiend them fend,
So that their souls be safe,
In wealth wi'out'en end;
I care nought else to crave.

(JESUS walks towards the cross.)

KNIGHT 1

Hey, hark, sir knights, for Mahound's blood!
Of Adam's kind is all his thought.

KNIGHT 2

This warlock waxes worse than wode!
This doleful death ne dreadeth he nought.

KNIGHT 3

Thou should have mind with main and mood
Of wicked works that thou did'st do.

KNIGHT 4

Had that wight had wit he would
Have ceased off saws he swore was true.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 1

(Holding up saw from toolbag)

These saws shall rue him sore
For all his sauntering, soon.

KNIGHT 2

Ill speed them that him spare
Till he to death be done!

KNIGHT 3

(To JESUS)

Have done, belive boy and make thee boun
And bend thy back unto this tree.

(JESUS unfastens his purple robe, and lets it fall to the ground. He lies down on the cross, and stretches out his arms in position.)

KNIGHT 4

Behold, himself has laid him down
In length and breadth as he should be.

KNIGHT 1

This traitor here tainted of treason
Go fast and fetter him then, ye three;
And since he claims a kingdom's crown
Even as a king here hang shall he.

KNIGHT 2

(Taking JESUS's right hand)

Now, certes, I shall not cease
Or his right hand be fast.

KNIGHT 3

(Taking JESUS's left hand)

The left hand then's my piece
Let see who bears him best.

KNIGHT 4

(Going to JESUS's feet)

His limbs on length shall I lead
And even unto the bore them bring.

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KNIGHT 1

(Going to JESUS's head)

Unto his head I shall take heed
And with mine hand help him to hang.

KNIGHT 2

Now since we four shall do this deed
And meddle with this unthrifty thing
Let no man spare for special speed
Till we have made ending.

KNIGHT 3

This forward may not fail
Now we are right arrayed.

KNIGHT 4

This boy here in our bail
Shall bide full bitter braid.

(KNIGHTS 2 and 3 tie JESUS's hands to cross.)

KNIGHT 1

Sir knights, say here . . . how work we now?

KNIGHT 2

Why sure I hope I hold this hand.

KNIGHT 3

And to the bore I have it brought
Full buxsome withouten band . . .

KNIGHT 1

Strike on then. Hard. For him thee bought.

KNIGHT 2

(Holding up a large nail)

Yes, here is a stub will stiffly stand;

(KNIGHT 2 throws the nail to KNIGHT 3 who catches it.)

Through bones and sinews it shall be sought.

(KNIGHT 3 hammers the nail into JESUS's left hand. JESUS cries

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out with pain, flinging his right arm into the air. KNIGHT 2 grasps JESUS'S right arm, and stretches it along the arm of the cross to secure it.)

This work is well, I will warrant.

(KNIGHT 1 crosses to examine the work.)

KNIGHT 1

Say, sir, how do we there?
This bargain will we win.

KNIGHT 3

It fails a foot or more
The sinews are so gone in.

KNIGHT 4

I think that mark amiss be bored.

KNIGHT 2

Then must he bide in bitter bale.

KNIGHT 3

In faith it was o'er scanty scored
That makes it foully for to fail.

KNIGHT 1

Why crack ye so? Fast on a cord
And tug him to, by top and tail.

(KNIGHT 2 ties a rope to the wrist of JESUS. KNIGHTS 2 and 4 haul on the rope, stretching the arm until it reaches the bore.)

KNIGHT 3

Yea, thou command us, lightly as a lord:
Come help to haul him, with ill hail!

KNIGHT 1

Now certes that I shall do --
Full snelly, like a snail.

(KNIGHT 1 makes no attempt to move.)

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 3

(Hammering a nail into JESUS'S right hand)

And I shall 'tach him to,
Full nimbly with a nail.
This work will hold that dare I heet
For now are fust fast both his hands.

KNIGHT 4

Go we all four then to his feet
So shall our space be speedily spent.

KNIGHT 2

Let's see what jest his bale might beet.
Thereto my back now would I bend.

KNIGHT 4

(Examining the bore at the foot of the cross)
Oh! This work is all unmeet
This boring must all be amend.

KNIGHT 1

Ah, peace man, for Mahoun!
Let no man know what wonder
A rope shall rug him down
If all his sinews go asunder.

KNIGHT 2

That cord full kindly can I knit
The comfort of this carl to cool.

KNIGHT 1

Fest on then fast that all be fit;
It is no force how fell he feel.

(KNIGHTS 2 and 4 move to the foot of the cross and haul on the ropes to stretch JESUS'S legs so that his feet meet the bore.)

KNIGHT 2

Lug on ye both a little yet.

KNIGHT 3

I shall not cease, as I have zeal.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 4

And I shall fond him for to hit.

KNIGHT 2

Oh! Hail!

KNIGHT 4

Ho now! I hold it well.

KNIGHT 1

Have done, drive in that nail,
So that no fault be found.

(KNIGHT 3 hammers a nail through JESUS's feet. KNIGHT 1 moves down to help him.)

KNIGHT 4

This working would not fail,
If four bulls were bound.

KNIGHT 1

These cords have evil increased his pains
Ere he were till the borings brought.

KNIGHT 2

(Taking a closer look at the nails)

Yea, asunder are both sinews and veins
On ilka side, so have we sought.

KNIGHT 3

Now all his gauds nothing him gains;
His sauntering shall with bale be bought.

KNIGHT 4

I will go say to our sovereigns
Of all these works how we have wrought.

(KNIGHTS 3 and 4 begin to move away.)

KNIGHT 1

Nay, sirs, another thing
Falls first to you and me:

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They bade we should him hang
On height that men might see.

(KNIGHTS 3 and 4 stop. They look at 'the height' (the stage) and at JESUS securely fastened to the cross.)

KNIGHT 2

We wot well so their words were;
But, sir, that deed will do us dear.

KNIGHT 1

It may not mend to moot it more;
This harlot must be hangèd here.

KNIGHT 2

(Inspecting the site for the raising of the cross)
The mortice is made fit therefore.

KNIGHT 3

Fest on your fingers then, all here.

(KNIGHT 3 throws rope up to KNIGHT 2. KNIGHT 4 takes right arm of cross. KNIGHT 3 takes left arm. They try to lift the cross. They let it down.)

KNIGHT 4

I ween it will never come there,
We four'll not raise it right this year.

KNIGHT 1

Say, man, why carp'st thou so?
Thy lifting was but light.

KNIGHT 2

He means there must be more
To heave him up on height.

KNIGHT 3

Now, sirs, I hope it shall not need
More company to cart t'cross there.
Methinks we four should do this deed.
Shrew me if I my wages share.

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THE PASSION

KNIGHT 1

It must be done, wi'out'en dread.
No more! But look ye be ready,

(KNIGHT 1 goes to left arm of cross, KNIGHT 3 to right.)

And this part shall I lift and lead;
On length he shall no longer lie.
Therefore now make ye boun:
Let's bear him to yon hill.

KNIGHT 4

(Going to foot of cross)

Then will I bear here down,
And tent his toes I will.

KNIGHT 2

This cross'll come out all cock-eyed,
This lad here's like to let it slip.

KNIGHT 3

No, sir, not I, I'm set this side,
I'll not let timber tip.

KNIGHT 2

More lifting, and less lip.

KNIGHT 1

LIFT UP!

(KNIGHTS 1, 3, 4, lift the cross unsuccessfully. KNIGHT 2 hauls on the ropes.)

KNIGHT 4

Let see!

KNIGHT 2

Oh, lift along!

KNIGHT 3

From all this harm he should him hide
If he were God.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 4

The Devil him hang!

KNIGHT 1

For great harm have I hent:
My shoulder is asunder.

KNIGHT 2

And shite I am near shent,
So long have I borne under.

KNIGHT 3

This cross and I in two must twin,
Else breaks my back asunder soon.

KNIGHT 4

Lay down again and leave your din;

(They lay the cross down.)

This deed for us will ne'er be done.

KNIGHT 1

Say, sirs, see if some engine
May help him up without delay
For here should workers worship win
And now go laik about all day.

KNIGHT 2

Workers worthier than we
You'll find 'em few enough.

KNIGHT 3

This bargain buggers me
I'm proper out of puff.

KNIGHT 4

So will of work never we were
I think this carl some craft has cast.

KNIGHT 2

My burden sat me wondrous sore;
Unto the hill I might not last.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 1

Lift up, and soon he shall be there;
Therefore fest on your fingers fast.

KNIGHT 3

Oh, lift!

(*Music. Four KNIGHTS lift cross, and carry it up the centre, and set it down.*)

KNIGHT 1

Heave ho!

KNIGHT 4

A little more.

KNIGHT 2

Hold then!

(*Music ends.*)

KNIGHT 1

How now?

KNIGHT 2

The worst is past.

KNIGHT 3

He weighs a wicked weight.

KNIGHT 2

So may we all four say,
Ere he was heaved on height,
And raised in this array.

KNIGHT 4

It made me bust my bollock stones
So boistous was he for to bear.

KNIGHT 1

Now raise him nimbly for the nonce
And set him by this mortice here;
And let him fall in all at once

THE PASSION

For certes that pain shall have no peer.

KNIGHT 3

Heave up!

KNIGHT 4

Let down! So all his bones
Asunder now on all sides tear.

(*Music. KNIGHT 4 climbs up a ladder to the bridge above the stage. KNIGHTS 2 and 3 throw up the ropes attached to the arms of the cross, and KNIGHT 4 catches them. KNIGHTS 1, 2, 3 then heave the cross into an upright position. KNIGHT 4 then grasps hold of the head of the cross, and keeps it steady, while KNIGHTS 1, 2, 3 secure the cross in an upright position. KNIGHT 4 secures head of cross against bridge and ties off the ropes on the rail of the bridge.*)

KNIGHT 1

(*Looking over JESUS's limbs*)

This falling was most fell.

T'cross cem down such a clout.

Now may a man well tell

Where t'Jew's least joints jut out.

KNIGHT 3

Methinketh this cross will not abide
Nor stand still in this mortice yet.

KNIGHT 4

Him as made mortice made it too wide,
That's why it waves. Young gormless get!

KNIGHT 1

It shall be set on ilka side,
So that it shall no further flit;
Good wedges shall we take this tide,
And fast the foot, then all is fit.

(*KNIGHT 3 runs off stage to toolbags to fetch wedges.*)

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 3

Here are wedges arrayed
For that both great and small.

KNIGHT 1

Where are our hammers laid,
That we should work withal?

(KNIGHT 3 drops wedges, and runs off stage again to fetch hammers from the toolbags. He finds them and holds them up.)

KNIGHTS 1, 2, 4 hold up their own hammers, laughing.)

KNIGHT 4

We have them here, even at our hand.

(KNIGHT 3 drops the hammers and moves back to the others on the stage.)

KNIGHT 2

Give me this wedge; I shall it drive.

(KNIGHT 2 hammers wedge into the base of the cross. Then KNIGHTS all move into the pit and look up at JESUS.)

KNIGHT 1

(To JESUS)

Say, sir, how likes ye now

This work that we have wrought?

KNIGHT 4

(To JESUS)

We pray you, tell us how

You feel, or faint ye, what?

JESUS

All men that walk by way or street
Let this sore scene sink in thy soul.
Behold my head, my hands, my feet,
And brood ye deep on my dire dole.
If any mourning may be meet,
Or mischief measured unto mine.

THE PASSION

My Father that all bales may beet,
Forgive these men that do me pine.
What they work wot they nought;

KNIGHT 1

(To crowd/audience)

Hey! Hark! He jangles like a jay.

KNIGHT 2

Methinks he patters like a pie.

KNIGHT 3

He has been doand so all day,
And made great moving of mercy.

KNIGHT 4

Is this the same that gan us say
That he was God's Son almighty?

KNIGHT 1

Therefore he feels full fell affray
And he is doomed this day to die.

KNIGHT 2

(To JESUS)

Vah! 'qui destruis templum ...'

KNIGHT 3

Or so he said he'd do.

KNIGHT 4

And sirs he said to some
He'd raise it up anew.

KNIGHT 1

To muster that he had no might
For all the craft that he could cast
All if he were in word so wight
For all his force now he is fast.
As Pilate doomed is done and dight;
Therefore I rede that we go rest.

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 2

This race mun be rehearsed right
Through the world both east and west.

KNIGHT 3

Yea, let him hang there still,
And make mows on the moon.

KNIGHT 4

Then may we wend at will.

(KNIGHTS 2, 3, 4 begin to walk away.)

KNIGHT 1

(Picking up JESUS'S purple robe from the ground)
Nay, good sirs, not so soon.

For certes us needs another note:
This kirtle would I of you crave.

KNIGHT 2

Nay, nay, sir, we will look by lot
Which of us four falls it to have.

KNIGHT 3

I rede we draw cut for this coat.

(KNIGHT 4 gets three long nails and one shorter one from the
toolbag, and holds them up in his fist to the others.)

KNIGHT 3

Lo, see how soon all sides to save.

(Each KNIGHT takes a nail. KNIGHT 3, thinking he has won,
immediately picks up the robe to walk off with it, but KNIGHT 4
stops him and shows him a shorter nail.)

KNIGHT 1

The short cut wins, that well ye wot
Whether it fall to knight or knave.

(Meanwhile, KNIGHT 1, with his back turned to the others, has cut
his nail with wire cutters so that his is the shortest.)

THE PASSION

KNIGHT 1

(Holds up his nail, and grabs the purple robe.)
Brothers, ye need not brawl!
This mantle is my gain.

KNIGHT 2

The gaffer wins again.
And we get bugger all.

(Exeunt KNIGHTS. Song: 'The Moon Shines Bright'.)

BAND

The moon shines bright and the stars give a light,
In a little while it will be day.
Our Lord our God he calls upon us all,
And he bids us awake and pray.

So dear, so dear Christ loved us,
And for our sins got slain,
I'd have you to leave all your wicked, wicked ways,
And turn to the Lord again.

For the life of a man, it is but a span,
And he flourishes like a flower,
For he's here today, tomorrow he's gone,
And he's dead all in an hour.

Christ on the Cross

Enter MARY MOTHER, MARY MAGDALENE, and MARY
SALOME with JOHN, who stand before the cross.

The three MARYS kneel facing the audience.

Enter CAYPHAS and ANNAS.

Enter PILATE.

PILATE
See, seignors, and see what I say;
Take tent to my talking entire.
Avoid all this din here this day,
And fall to my friendship all here.