

A script from



## **"But Sunday's Coming"**

by

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## **SYNOPSIS**

There's Good Friday, and there's Easter Sunday. And then there's the day in between, filled with waiting, grieving, and just plain not-understanding. This is a one-act illustrating both the Biblical passion-week Saturday and the days when we struggle to understand God's timing.

**Themes:** Easter, One-Act, Waiting, Faith

## **CAST**

Tara– New mother

Dan– Her husband

Marcus– New recruit for the Roman Empire (late teens - 20's)

Max– Experienced, "seasoned" Roman soldier (40's-50's)

Michael– A follower of Jesus (30's-40's)

Becca– A follower of Jesus, Michael's wife (30's-40's)

Mary (Magdalene)– Follower of Jesus (approx. 30's)

## **PROPS**

Two tables

Five chairs

Workbench

Crib

Hand-held timer (a separate timer sound effect may be required)

Laptop computer

Bowl of popcorn

Laundry basket and towels

Cell phone

Tara and Dan wear casual or "lounge" clothes

We recommend that other characters wear plain black (not Biblical costume) to avoid distraction.

## **HOW**

There are four different scenes taking place at once. Therefore, each story should have one specific location on stage. If you have access to a lighting system, lights should go dark on scenes that are not being performed at that time. If you do not have access to a lighting system, actors should freeze when their scene is not being performed.

Scenes with Tara and Dan assume a baby screaming in the background. Although a sound effect can be used, we recommend using actors' responses to signal to the audience when the crying starts and stops. In Scene 10 (when the crying stops and then resumes), actors' physical responses must be timed precisely.

## **TIME**

Approximately 20 minutes

*The stage is set with four different scenes.*

*Downstage right there is a bench. Upstage right there is a table with chairs. Upstage left there is a bare table. Downstage left there is a table with two chairs. Next to the table is a laundry basket with unfolded towels and on the table is a laptop and a bowl of popcorn.*

## Scene 1

*Lights up downstage left. **Dan** sits at a table, a laptop open in front of him. There is an empty chair next to him at the table, and a bowl of popcorn in the center of the table. **Tara** enters, holding a small timer.*

**Tara:** Fifteen minutes. We're going to give it fifteen minutes.

*She puts the timer on the table, then sits and stares at it. **Dan** lifts his eyes from the computer screen and looks at **Tara**.*

**Dan:** Are you going to sit and watch that timer for—

**Tara:** Fifteen minutes. We're going to... *(she puts her hands to her ears)* Give it fifteen minutes. *(She stands)* I can't do this.

**Dan:** Yes. You can. He has to cry it out.

**Tara:** What if something is wrong?

**Dan:** It's not.

**Tara:** It might be.

**Dan:** You were just in there. Is he still in his crib?

**Tara:** Yes.

**Dan:** With his eyes shut?

**Tara:** Yes.

**Dan:** Then he's just really tired, and he has to cry it out.

**Tara:** I know. I know. I just hate it when he cries.

***Dan** returns to his computer.*

**Dan:** Fifteen minutes.

**Tara:** It's more like fourteen now.

**Dan:** Just relax.

*She continues to sit watching the timer.*

**Tara:** What if he forgets that I love him?

**Dan:** You can remind him when he wakes up.

**Tara:** If he ever goes to sleep.

**Dan:** He'll go to sleep if you don't keep going in there every two seconds.

*As Tara says the next lines, she slowly gets louder and faster, progressively getting more and more upset.*

**Tara:** Why can't he just go to sleep? I hate the waiting, you know? My whole life is just one big waiting game, one big waiting game.

*Dan slowly looks up.*

**Tara:** That publisher is never going to get back to me. It's going to take forever to fit back into my old jeans. The doctor is taking his sweet time getting my sister's test results back to her. Our son is not going to stop crying and if our dog keeps barking I'm officially going to lose it!

**Dan:** *(Calling to an unseen dog)* Scout, sit. *(Pause)* Good boy.

**Tara:** And I think the post-pregnancy hormones are finally kicking in. *(She quickly turns to Dan)* Don't say it.

**Dan:** I didn't say anything.

**Tara:** But you were thinking it.

**Dan:** I wasn't. I wasn't thinking about anything.

**Tara:** You weren't? Haven't you been listening?

**Dan:** *(Choosing his words carefully)* I was intently listening, while not thinking about anyone's crazy hormones.

*Tara sits.*

**Tara:** *(Apologetically)* I'm sorry. His crying puts me over the edge. Sometimes I just want to cry with him. Why can't babies just be born knowing how to sleep? *(Pause; she grabs her phone)* And why can't Emily just call me?

**Dan:** When are you supposed to hear from your sister?

**Tara:** As soon as she hears from the doctor.

**Dan:** It's probably nothing.

**Tara:** I know. It's just the waiting that's hard, you know. (*Tara puts her hands back over her ears*) He's crying so loud.

**Dan:** Just fifteen—

**Tara:** (*Interrupting him*) It's thirteen minutes now.

*Lights down.*

## Scene 2

*Lights up downstage right. **Marcus** sits on a bench putting on work boots. **Max** enters and begins to do the same.*

**Max:** Heading out?

*Marcus, deep in thought, doesn't hear **Max**.*

**Max:** Marcus.

**Marcus:** (*He snaps to attention*) Oh, hey.

**Max:** I asked if you were heading out.

**Marcus:** Nope. Just getting here.

**Max:** You and me then, huh? They're calling this is a two-man job?

**Marcus:** They've got guys on the other side too.

**Max:** Ha! Well, no complaints here. I could use an easy post for once. Last night I had some lunatic at the prison. He spent the whole night spitting and calling down curses in Greek.

**Marcus:** (*Not listening*) Sounds like fun.

**Max:** (*Studying **Marcus***) You look whipped.

**Marcus:** Whipped?

**Max:** Whipped. Beat. You look beat.

**Marcus:** (*Muttering*) That's one way to put it.

**Max:** What?

**Marcus:** You're right. I'll sleep it off tomorrow.

**Max:** You work last night, too?

**Marcus:** No. Just had a long day.

**Max:** Ah. Welcome to the graveyard shift.

**Marcus:** *(Sarcastically)* Sounds like a party.

**Max:** It's a waste; is what it is. I've been doing this twenty years, and I can tell you, **THIS** is a one-man job. This could be a HALF-man job.

**Marcus:** I'd be good with going somewhere else.

*Pause.*

**Max:** You ok?

**Marcus:** Yeah.

*Max stops putting his boots on and turns to Marcus.*

**Max:** You were at the hearing yesterday. Weren't you?

**Marcus:** And the sentencing.

*Silence.*

**Max:** Rough crowd.

**Marcus:** I've never seen riots like that before.

**Max:** The first one's always the worst. You'll toughen up.

**Marcus:** It's not what I expected.

**Max:** You'll get used to it. It won't be your last, believe me.

**Marcus:** I know.

**Max:** World's falling apart, kid. People are getting crazier every day. That's why we're here.

**Marcus:** I guess.

*Max stands up and paces.*

**Max:** It's why we're here...so two of us can spend twelve hours watching a rock. *(To an imaginary audience)* And that's our taxes at work, folks.

*Pause.*

**Max:** What *did* you expect?

**Marcus:** More justice.

**Max:** You wanted him to be innocent, huh?

**Marcus:** I don't know.

*Pause.*

**Marcus:** I didn't want him to be guilty.

**Max:** I remember watching my first trial. I wanted all of them to be innocent.

*Pause.*

**Marcus:** I saw his mother—

**Max:** *(Interrupting)* First mistake. Never look at the mother.

**Marcus:** She was *sure* he was innocent.

**Max:** A lot of people were sure he was innocent. And a lot of people wanted him out of the way.

**Marcus:** Are we sure we made the right—

**Max:** *(Interrupting)* Don't go there. We don't decide justice. We execute it.

**Marcus:** Execute it.

*Pause.*

**Marcus:** That was a fast trial, Max, a really fast trial.

**Max:** That's not your issue. Don't let the job get to you. You put your boots on, you do what you have to do, and you go home.

**Marcus:** You're right. Let's just get this over with.

*Lights down.*

### Scene 3

*Lights up upstage right. Becca is pacing anxiously. Suddenly the door opens and Michael enters. He appears haggard and worn, which goes unnoticed by Becca.*

**Becca:** Where have you been? We've been going crazy worrying about you!

**Michael:** My trip went long. And then I had...I had a meeting.

**Becca:** What?! You travel overnight on business way too much as it is...and then, after a disaster like yesterday, you stayed for a MEETING?

**Michael:** Becca, you need to let me explain. I know it sounds—

**Becca:** Yesterday was awful. I was already behind on the holiday work—

**Michael:** There's something I have to tell you.

**Becca:** *(Not listening)* But if that wasn't stressful enough, then we were alone during that earthquake.

**Michael:** Becca. You'll understand if you just let me—

**Becca:** Yes, I know what to do in an earthquake. But I don't ever remember an earthquake with a solar eclipse at the same time. No one knew what was going on. We thought the world was ending. The table's shaking, it's pitch black, Anna's over there wailing away, and the boys are screaming at the top of their lungs. I'm wondering if the house is going to come down on our heads, or if you're in a ditch somewhere.

**Michael:** First, I'm sorry you were alone. But I need you to listen to me—

**Becca:** *(Again not listening)* And we spent today picking up the pieces. Literally. Suffice it to say, dinner's not ready. And you'd better check that back wall because there's a fracture in the corner about the size of your face.

**Michael:** Becca. He's dead.

*She pauses, turns to him and puts her hands over her mouth in disbelief.*

*Lights down.*

#### Scene 4

*Lights up upstage left. A young woman stands behind a table letting her hands rest firmly on it, while speaking forcibly and directly towards the audience.*

**Mary:** Pull it together. I said, pull it together.

*She takes a deep, controlled breath.*

That's better.

*Although she is addressing herself, she continues as if berating another person.*



And maybe if you had been able to pull it together a little sooner, you wouldn't have had to stand so far back. You wouldn't have watched, helpless, like everyone else. And after all he did for you...you did...nothing? How could you?

*Pause.*

No, you couldn't have stopped it. But you could have offered some...some...

*Looking for the right words.*

Something. Reassurance. Comfort. Not that you had any to give.

*Pause. Her expression softens and she speaks more reflectively, switching from "you" to "I."*

I should have at least gotten close enough to look him in the eye, close enough to see him...really see him one last time.

*She begins to pace.*

I haven't felt like this in years: helpless, paralyzed, like a caged animal, about to jump out of my skin. God help me. This isn't me anymore... Right? *(Not convincingly)*

The old "me" doesn't come back just because he's gone.

*With more conviction.*

No. I can't go back to my old life. Back to hearing things and seeing things no one should have to hear or see. Every day was a nightmare. No! I'm not who I was.

*Beat.*

After I met him...it all changed. I changed. I'm not that broken, tormented person anymore. I belong to Him. Or— I did. But he's gone. Where does that leave me? Who am I now?

*Lights down.*

## Scene 5

*Lights up downstage left. Dan is still sitting, reading off his laptop. Tara sits, staring at the timer. Dan hands Tara the popcorn bowl.*

**Tara:** I can't eat while he's screaming his brains out.

**Dan:** Actually, I think he's quieting down.

**Tara:** Right. He went from roaring lion to screaming hyena.

**Dan:** Exactly.

**Tara:** That's not quieting down.

**Dan:** Maybe it's his nighttime wind-down.

**Tara:** Lion to hyena?

**Dan:** He's going down the food chain.

*Tara stands.*

**Dan:** Sit. You've still got ten minutes.

**Tara:** This is torture. I feel like it's my job as a mother to save him.

*Tara begins to pace.*

**Dan:** From what? A good night's sleep? Give it ten more minutes.

**Tara:** He might suffocate by then.

**Dan:** Judging by that scream, he's definitely still breathing.

*Tara stops pacing.*

**Tara:** *(Reluctantly)* It's just that he doesn't understand why we're letting him cry.

**Dan:** *(Sarcastically)* You want to go explain it to him?

**Tara:** I tried that.

**Dan:** You stood over the crib and explained the impact of sleep on the neurological development of a three-month-old? I can't believe that didn't work.

*Tara manages a tense smile.*

**Dan:** You've got nine minutes. Sit down.

*Cell phone rings. Tara leaps to check it, then sinks, disappointed.*

**Tara:** *(Talking into the phone)* Hey, Mom.

*Pause.*

**Tara:** *(Talking into the phone)* Sorry, I thought you were Emily. No, she hasn't called me, either. *(Pause; talking into the phone)* Oh, not much. Dan's holding me hostage as our son screams for his life. I'm surprised you can't hear him. It's like he's being tortured.

*Without looking up from his computer, Dan raises his voice so the person on the other end of the phone can hear him.*

**Dan:** He's just exercising his lungs, Gail.

**Tara:** *(Still talking into the phone)* Yup. I have the salad all ready to go and I'll bring the pie. The Easter service will be over by noon, so we'll be at your house no later than one.

*Pause.*

**Tara:** *(Rolling her eyes)* Yes, I bought him Peeps. I'll be sure to put them in his Easter basket tomorrow morning, to ensure the family tradition continues.

**Dan:** *(To Tara)* He's not even on solid food.

*Tara puts her hand over her phone to make sure that her mother doesn't hear Dan's comment.*

**Tara:** *(Speaking into the phone)* I'll let you know what he thinks.

*Pause.*

**Tara:** *(Speaking into the phone)* Video it?

*Dan looks up as if to say something. Tara motions for him to stay quiet.*

**Tara:** Umm, I'll see if my phone will do that. Not promising anything. *(Pause)* Ok. We'll see you tomorrow. Love you too. *(Tara looks at the timer)* Seven minutes.

*Tara grabs the laundry basket and dumps some towels on the table. She then quickly folds and places them back in the laundry basket as she says the next few lines. Dan continues reading his computer screen.*

**Tara:** Let's fold some laundry.

**Dan:** By us, you mean you, right?

**Tara:** I'm just trying to distract us.

**Dan:** I'm distracted.

**Tara:** Six minutes.

*Dan picks up the timer and moves it closer to him.*

**Dan:** Let me hold onto this. You're driving me crazy.

*Lights down.*

## Scene 6

*Lights up downstage right.*

**Marcus:** A graveyard shift in an actual graveyard. This has got to be a first.

**Max:** Look on the bright side. Guarding a dead man equals a pretty dead shift. *(Pause)* Get it? Dead shift? *(Sarcastically)* You're going to be lots of fun to talk to tonight.

*Lights down.*

## Scene 7

*Lights up upstage right.*

**Becca:** *(Startled)* What? Who's dead?

*Michael opens his mouth as if to say something, then closes it and looks away.*

**Becca:** *(Suddenly understanding)* No! No, that can't—they wouldn't—he wouldn't—

**Michael:** They did.

**Becca:** Are you saying they actually tried to execute him, like a common criminal? That's insane.

**Michael:** They didn't try to execute him. They *did* execute him.

**Becca:** *(Frantic)* That's not possible. You said last week they were looking for some kind of loophole, right? Because they were pushing for the death penalty?

**Michael:** Yes, that's what I said.

**Becca:** But you said they couldn't find anything legal to get him on. There isn't anything. They can't just kill an innocent man.

**Michael:** It's completely unjust. I don't understand how they could go through with it.

**Becca:** But God would never let him die. You said God chose him. You said he was changing everything.

**Michael:** I know. I know I said that.

**Becca:** So there has to be some kind of mistake.

**Michael:** I met with some of the others to talk legalities, that kind of thing. There are a lot of complications with the holiday. Joseph went to the governor and it sounds like they worked something out.

**Becca:** Worked what out?

**Michael:** The burial.

**Becca:** But that's ridiculous. He can't actually be dead.

**Michael:** *(Losing composure, with rising intensity)* They drove nails through his hands. They put a spear through his side. He was beaten and bloody, he wasn't even recognizable. They crucified him. I was there, Becca. I was there. He's dead. It's over.

*Lights down.*

## Scene 8

*Lights up downstage left. Tara finishes folding at a feverish pace and then sits back down.*

**Tara:** Now what? Ironing?

**Dan:** Sure. Knock yourself out.

**Tara:** Do you know what you're wearing tomorrow?

**Dan:** The same thing I wore last night.

**Tara:** You can't wear the same outfit for Good Friday and Easter.

**Dan:** Why not? I only have one suit. Plus, there's a whole twenty-four hours between Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

**Tara:** *(Not impressed)* A whole 24 hours.

**Dan:** Yeah. God put 24 hours between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, so men could wear the same thing to church and no one would notice.

**Tara:** *(Sarcastically)* I'm sure that was the reason.

**Dan:** *(Still joking)* Well, then, why else wouldn't he just rise from the dead Saturday morning?

*Pause.*

**Tara:** *(Thoughtfully)* That's a good point.

**Dan:** Uh huh. God knew us guys would be—

**Tara:** No. I mean, have you ever thought about that? Why didn't he rise from the dead on Saturday?

*Dan looks up, and then shuts his laptop.*

**Tara:** His disciples were scared to death, his friends confused, his mother must have been a wreck. *(Tara picks up the timer)* Why let them "cry it out" for 24 hours? Why the waiting game?

**Dan:** I don't know. *(Pause)* Maybe it's beyond our understanding.

**Tara:** *(Not convinced)* Maybe.

**Dan:** You just said you told Braden why we're letting him cry. He didn't understand you. But that doesn't mean that you don't have a reason.

*Lights down.*

## Scene 9

*Lights up downstage right.*

**Marcus:** I don't understand. Why do they have posts set on every side? They think there's going to be some kind of counter-attack, don't they?

**Max:** Religious freaks, protesters, disciples might try to steal the body. But hey. If they're those scrawny guys who bolted right at the beginning, I'd send half of us home. At *least* half.

**Marcus:** Good. I've already killed my share of criminals this weekend.

**Max:** Hang in there, kid. Weekend's almost over. Sunday's coming.

*Lights down.*

Scene 10

*Lights up downstage left.*

Tara: *(Whispering)* Do you hear that?

Dan: Silence.

Tara: He stopped crying. I can't believe it. He stopped crying. *(She collapses into a chair)* That was painful.

Dan: Do you think he'll sleep through the night?

Tara: We can only hope.

*Both start to slowly and quietly get up. Suddenly, the timer in Tara's hand goes off. Tara puts her hands over her ears as they both sit back down.*

Dan: Well, at least we know his lungs are healthy.

Tara: *(Moaning)* He's NEVER going to go to sleep!

Dan: He was almost there. Give him five more minutes.

*Phone chimes. Tara grabs it.*

Tara: It's not her. *(Frustrated she puts her head on the table)* Waiting hurts.

Dan: It's not forever.

Tara: It feels like an eternity.

Dan: You know that Saturday after the crucifixion must have felt like an eternity too.

Tara: But Easter came. We know the ending of that story.

Dan: We know the ending of ours too.

Tara: *(Doubtful)* Really? Fill me in.

Dan: Sunday's coming.

Tara: These Saturdays of waiting just really stink.

Dan: But Sunday's coming.

*Lights down.*

Scene 11

*Lights up upstage left.*

**Mary:** *(Looking straight ahead, as if to a reflection)* Now what? *(Pause)*  
Nothing, huh? You're a lot of help.

*She sadly shakes her head and laughs.*

Yelling at my reflection. I'm going crazy. The whole world is going crazy. Pull it together, Mary. Pull yourself together. You have a job to do. It's the least you can do after everything he did for you. He deserves a real burial, one that honors who he was.

*Pause. She reflects on what she just said and then corrects herself.*

Who He is.

*She starts to break down.*

He can't really be gone. He can't. He was supposed to make it all—to fix—

He was the Messiah. He *is* the Messiah. God, how can this be part of your plan?

*She wipes her eyes and pulls back her hair as she stares straight ahead as if looking into a mirror.*

A few hours and it'll be time to go to the tomb. Almost Sunday, Mary, you have to sleep. You have to try to sleep.

*Lights down.*

## Scene 12

*Lights up upstage right.*

**Becca:** Now what?

**Michael:** We keep believing.

**Becca:** In what?

**Michael:** In God. He's...he's got to have a plan.

**Becca:** A plan that includes killing the Messiah? What kind of plan is that?

**Michael:** I don't know. Maybe Jesus wasn't the—



**Becca:** He *was*. He was supposed to redeem Israel. (*Helpless*) I don't know what went wrong.

*Pause.*

**Michael:** Just one day at a time, ok?

*Becca stands.*

**Becca:** The children are in bed. We should get some sleep, too.

*Beat.*

**Becca:** How do we tell the kids? We'll have to tell them in the morning.

*Michael stands and takes Becca's hands.*

**Michael:** One day at a time. Let's just get through tonight. God's mercies are new every morning.

**Becca:** Even tomorrow morning? I'm not so sure.

**Michael:** His mercies were new Friday and today, and they will be new Sunday. Let's just keep the faith tonight.

*The entire stage goes black. There is slight pause.*

### Scene 13

*Lights up downstage left. The table is gone and is replaced by a crib.*

*Tara enters and walks over to the crib. She looks down at the baby.*

**Tara:** Rise and shine, little man. Did you get a good night's sleep? Saturday's done. No more crying. It's Easter Sunday.

*Lights out.*