

HOPE IS NEAR

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EXT. SIDE LANE - DAY

A narrow Jerusalem lane runs between stone and mudbrick. Heat keeps the line close to the wall, where a chalk mark has worn thin beneath passing feet.

MARY MAGDALENE, mid-20s, lean and watchful, stops at the mouth with a chipped water jar at her hip and a smooth pebble turning through her fingers.

A basket rides too wide. A shoulder follows. A heel scuffs through the chalk.

TAP. TAP.

The signal travels low along the wall.

Farther down, an answer comes.

TAP. TAP.

The file adjusts before it breaks.

A NEIGHBOR steps out with a basket and flattens himself too late, nearly catching the woman behind him.

MARY MAGDALENE
Keep it close.

He pulls the basket in, and the woman behind him finds room.

NEIGHBOR
Morning, Mary.

Mary waits until the lane steadies.

MARY MAGDALENE
Morning.

At the corner, a TEMPLE ATTENDANT stands with a wax tablet under his arm, pressing his thumb into one mark, rubbing it clean, then pressing again.

The second mark cuts deeper.

A MAN with kindling drifts past the chalk. The attendant steps half a foot into the lane, forcing the file to bend around him.

The man checks himself back to stone.

MAN
I moved back.

The attendant marks the tablet anyway.

Space opens around the man before he understands why. Eyes leave the chalk and find him instead.

Mary steps close enough for him to hear.

MARY MAGDALENE
Keep walking.

He looks from Mary to the wax, caught between the two dangers.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
Do not give him a witness.

The man moves on.

The neighbor watches the mark settle.

NEIGHBOR
They count faster now.

MARY MAGDALENE
They count what frightens them.

NEIGHBOR
No. Faster than that. Two lanes sealed before sunrise.

Mary keeps the file moving.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)
And this time...

He checks the attendant, then lowers his voice.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)
They named what taught people to move.

The pebble stops in Mary's fingers.

MARY MAGDALENE
What did they name?

The neighbor gives her nothing.

A distant WOOD THUD carries from deeper in the city.

Mary places her palm to stone.

Farther down the wall, RUTH, 60s, steady-eyed, does the same. The neighbor follows. Then the woman who drew away from the chalk. Then the man with kindling.

The file loosens by inches.

NEIGHBOR
That from Magdala too?

MARY MAGDALENE
No.

Another THUD carries.

Closer.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
That is from here.

The attendant watches her a beat too long as she passes.

Mary keeps her eyes on the lane.

INT. MARY'S COURTYARD ROOM - DAY

A small room sits off a tight courtyard, low-ceilinged and close with heat.

EZRA, 10, thin, stands with his back to the wall, fighting a breath that keeps climbing.

MARY MAGDALENE
Again.

He inhales.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
Lower.

EZRA
I know.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then let your body know.

The breath catches before it drops. Mary steps in too quickly and places two fingers beneath his ribs.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
Here.

Ezra flinches hard enough to strike the wall behind him.

The sound stops her.

She sees what her speed did, and when she returns her hand, she is lighter.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Here.

Ezra follows the pressure until his breathing settles.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

There.

EZRA

Was that better?

MARY MAGDALENE

Closer.

EZRA

You always say closer.

MARY MAGDALENE

Because closer keeps you standing.

EZRA

Maybe standing is all I have.

The pebble turns through Mary's fingers.

EZRA (CONT'D)

You do it too.

The pebble stops.

EZRA (CONT'D)

When you're scared.

Mary does not answer right away.

MARY MAGDALENE

When I'm thinking.

EZRA

Same thing?

Mary closes the pebble in her fist.

MARY MAGDALENE

When your breath climbs, people look.

EZRA

Who?

MARY MAGDALENE
 Anyone paid to. Anyone afraid
 enough.

EZRA
 And if I do it right and they look
 anyway?

MARY MAGDALENE
 Then you give them nothing useful.

MARA, early 30s, appears in the doorway.

MARA
 Mary.

Mary reads her before she speaks.

MARY MAGDALENE
 Where?

MARA
 The well lane. Board and wax.

Ezra's knees soften as his fingers search for the wall.

MARY MAGDALENE
 Ezra.

He tries to bring the breath down, but it stays high.

MARA
 Leave him here.

MARY MAGDALENE
 No.

MARA
 Look at him.

MARY MAGDALENE
 I am.

MARA
 No. You're measuring what he can
 survive.

Mara looks at Ezra.

MARA (CONT'D)
 He's already tight.

MARY MAGDALENE
 Then he learns tight.

MARA

I know why you teach him the wall.
I'm asking what it leaves him.

EZRA

I am right here.

That stops them.

Mary places the pebble in Ezra's palm.

MARY MAGDALENE

Easy hand.

He grips too hard, then loosens.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Where do you stay?

EZRA

Near the wall.

MARY MAGDALENE

And if the wall goes?

EZRA

Find the next edge.

MARA

You say that like the world gives
one.

MARY MAGDALENE

It gives something.

MARA

People cannot live forever by
bracing.

MARY MAGDALENE

They already are.

Mary reaches for the jar, but the cord slips before she catches it.

EZRA

Why do you keep making me do this?

MARY MAGDALENE

Because out there, nobody stops for
you.

EZRA

You do.

MARY MAGDALENE
Not once you are inside it.

Ezra waits.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
One bad breath, they mark you. One
wrong turn, they leave you where
you fall.

EZRA
How do you know?

MARY MAGDALENE
Because I told someone once I could
read it.

Mara goes quiet.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
He believed me.

The room holds that longer than Mary wants.

MARA
That is more than you ever give
him.

Mary turns back to Ezra.

MARY MAGDALENE
If someone cuts across you?

EZRA
Keep the wall.

MARY MAGDALENE
If you lose it?

EZRA
Find the next edge.

MARY MAGDALENE
Good.

EZRA
What if I fail?

Mary takes longer with this one.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then stay near me until you don't.

She offers him the jar.

Ezra hesitates.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
Easy hands. Same as the stone.

He takes the jar, and the weight pulls at him before he settles it against his body.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
Good.

MARA
Bring him back breathing.

MARY MAGDALENE
I will.

MARA
Mary.

Mary stops at the doorway.

MARA (CONT'D)
He is not one of your lanes.

The jar cord slips against Mary's palm.

For a moment, she has nothing to correct.

Then she looks to Ezra.

MARY MAGDALENE
Come on.

Ezra follows her out with the jar in both hands.

EXT. DUSTY FIELD - DAY

A strip of white cloth snaps against a splintered quarantine stake.

Open ground stretches outside the city, where short grass bends in the heat.

JESUS OF NAZARETH, early 30s, kneels with a sparrow cupped in both hands. He waits until the trembling stills, then opens his palms.

The sparrow lifts into the hard light.

PETER, 30s, broad and restless, comes up behind him.

PETER

Yours?

JESUS

For a moment.

PETER

You let it go every time.

JESUS

It leaves when it can.

From the city, a distant CLACK cuts through the open ground.

Down the slope, a SEALED MAN walks with a wax strap fixed around his wrist. People clear before they fully see him.

A WOMAN starts toward him with a waterskin, sees the seal, and stops. A child beside her is pulled back by the shoulder.

The sealed man reaches after the water has already gone.

Jesus steps down the slope.

PETER

Leave it.

Jesus waits until the woman's grip loosens, then takes the waterskin and carries it to the sealed man.

The man's hands shake too badly to lift it. Jesus steadies the skin while he drinks.

The man looks at him once, ashamed of needing it.

Jesus leaves the waterskin with him.

Around them, coins are gathered faster, bodies recoil sooner, and the guard watches from the road.

Jesus goes to the white strip tied to the quarantine stake.

Peter stops short of it.

PETER (CONT'D)

No.

Jesus loosens the knot.

PETER (CONT'D)

That tells them where to look.

The cloth comes free.

No one on the road moves toward him.

Jesus binds the strip around his own wrist.

PETER (CONT'D)
You keep walking at the mark like
they are going to care why.

JESUS
I am not asking them to care.

PETER
Then what are you asking?

Jesus starts toward the city.

JESUS
That he not carry it alone.

Peter looks back at the sealed man, who keeps walking with
the waterskin held close.

PETER
And when they mark you for standing
near him?

JESUS
A mark is not the same as a truth.

Peter follows.

EXT. LOW ROAD ABOVE THE CITY WELL - DAY

A public well sits below the road. One side holds against
stone while the open side keeps feeding bodies toward the
basin.

The front narrows at the water. The back keeps coming.

Mary and Ezra move along the stone side. Ezra carries the jar
with both hands.

Two Roman soldiers hold the road while a Temple Clerk marks a
tablet near the basin.

Jesus and Peter enter near the back.

PETER
Too quiet.

MARY MAGDALENE
It won't stay that way.

Ahead, a woman edges closer to stone, and the man behind her follows.

Jesus places his palm against the wall.

A narrow seam opens along the stone.

PETER
They moved for you.

JESUS
They moved for space.

At the basin, a man steps forward with an empty waterskin.

TEMPLE GUARD
Closed.

MAN
Just one.

TEMPLE GUARD
Closed.

MAN
My children are waiting.

TEMPLE GUARD
Then let them.

The man steps again.

CLACK.

A strap seals his wrist.

The line recoils from the basin, leaving a hard ring of space around him while the bodies behind it keep pressing forward.

WOMAN
Sealed.

SECOND WOMAN
Stay clear.

The man's waterskin rolls toward the open side.

Jesus steps in, picks it up, and sets it beside him.

The sealed man starts to thank him, but the line pulls back harder before the words come.

A woman sees the strip on Jesus' wrist.

WOMAN
He touched one.

SECOND WOMAN
Stay off him too.

Ezra grips Mary's sleeve.

EZRA
Mary.

MARY MAGDALENE
Stay with me.

At the front, a boy slips near the basin. A bucket hits stone, and water spreads toward the open side.

The line surges from the spill and drives back toward the wall.

VOICES
Watch it.
Move.
Not there.

Ezra is pulled off the stone side.

MARY MAGDALENE
Ezra.

Mary reaches too late. The wall gives her no path to him.

Peter steps forward.

PETER
Make room.

MARY MAGDALENE
Not with your hands.

Peter's fist closes at his side.

He stops himself.

Jesus taps low.

TAP. TAP.

No answer.

Ezra's fingers tighten around the pebble.

MARY MAGDALENE

Easy.

Ezra loosens enough to tap back.

TAP. TAP.

Farther down the stone side:

TAP. TAP.

The seam begins to open.

On the open side, a woman mistakes the gap for escape.

WOMAN

Here.

She turns across it, and two others follow.

For half a breath, the line obeys both fears at once.

The seam thins around Ezra's shoulder.

MAN

No. Not there.

MARY MAGDALENE

Wait.

Pressure rolls through the line.

A man in the middle plants his feet.

MAN

There is no space.

Near Ezra, the seam still holds.

Mary lowers her voice.

MARY MAGDALENE

Turn through what gives.

The woman nearest Ezra turns sideways.

The wrong turn dies as room opens along the stone.

Mary pulls Ezra back beside her, but his breath is high.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Lower.

EZRA

I can't.

A bucket tips toward him.

Jesus catches it and places it in Ezra's hands.

JESUS

Hold the weight.

Ezra resists it.

MARY MAGDALENE

Ezra.

JESUS

Let that be heavier than fear.

Ezra lets the bucket settle against him, and his breath drops.

Mary starts to correct him, then stops short of Jesus' hand on the bucket.

MARY MAGDALENE

There.

A woman nearby stays where she is.

WOMAN

He stayed up.

The sealed man moves on with the waterskin.

PETER

They saw all of that.

MARY MAGDALENE

They always do.

JESUS

So do the ones behind them.

Farther along, a man shifts early.

The clerk's stylus hangs over the tablet.

He looks past Ezra to the bodies copying the shift.

Only then does he mark.

PETER

That was not just him.

MARY MAGDALENE
It counts if he keeps it.

JESUS
It counts if they do.

Mary's hand tightens around the jar cord.

A woman near the basin pulls her child closer.

WOMAN
They're marking more now.

The clerk adds another line beneath the first.

PETER
For what?

Mary keeps Ezra moving.

MARY MAGDALENE
For what spreads.

Jesus remains with the line as Mary guides Ezra forward.

EXT. ROAD LEAVING THE WELL - DAY

Ezra carries the bucket for a few steps before Mary takes it back.

His free hand stays along the wall.

EZRA
I had it.

MARY MAGDALENE
For a moment.

EZRA
I kept it. They followed.

MARY MAGDALENE
Today, they did.

Behind them, faintly:

TAP. TAP.

Ezra turns back.

Near the well, a woman turns sideways before pressure reaches her, and space opens without Mary.

EZRA

They saw.

Mary looks back long enough to see the opening hold.

MARY MAGDALENE

Good. Let it hold.

Ezra loosens his grip on the wall and takes one step without it.

They keep moving.

INT. MARY'S COURTYARD ROOM - NIGHT

Low light trembles around a small oil flame.

Ezra sits on the floor with a bowl in his lap while Mary mends the jar cord across from him.

He eats, then nudges the bowl closer to the wall without thinking.

A shadow crosses the doorway.

Ezra angles toward stone before he catches himself.

MARY MAGDALENE

Eat.

EZRA

I am.

A distant CLACK carries through the courtyard.

Ezra's spoon hangs above the bowl.

MARY MAGDALENE

Ezra.

The spoon lowers.

EZRA

They sealed another lane today.

MARY MAGDALENE

I know.

EZRA

How many are left?

Mary looks toward the doorway before she pulls the cord tight. Somewhere outside, a cough passes through the courtyard.

MARY MAGDALENE

Enough.

EZRA

That is not an answer.

MARY MAGDALENE

It is the one we have.

He looks toward the doorway.

EZRA

If someone comes through there—

MARY MAGDALENE

Not now.

EZRA

But if they do.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then we move.

EZRA

Where?

Mary taps the space beside her.

MARY MAGDALENE

Here.

Ezra looks at the space but does not move.

EZRA

That is the middle.

MARY MAGDALENE

Not in this room.

EZRA

It is if they come from both sides.

Mary's hand pauses in the mend.

The doorway stands open. The courtyard opening waits behind her.

Ezra sets the bowl down unfinished.

EZRA (CONT'D)
I keep seeing it close when it
isn't.

Mary has no correction for that.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Tell me where to go.

The cord lies unfinished in Mary's hands.

MARY MAGDALENE
If I tell you wrong, you pay for
it.

The flame moves against the wall.

Ezra pulls his knees tighter, and his hand finds the pebble.

He grips it hard.

This time, Mary lets him.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
Hold it if you need to.

EXT. VILLAGE LANES - DAY

Mudbrick walls crowd both sides of twisting paths. Smoke
hangs low. Roman boots move through.

A villager steps too late, and a spear shaft stops him.

Nearby, a fresh wax strap catches light on a doorway while a
cough sounds behind it. A woman sets a covered bowl outside
the line and backs away.

The cough sounds again.

A mother wipes a half-drawn chalk mark from the mudbrick.

PETER
Now chalk scares them too.

JESUS
Not the chalk.

PETER
Close enough.

A woman with a bundle shifts closer to stone to let a soldier
pass. The man behind her follows.

Jesus runs his fingers along the wall as they walk.

JESUS
This still holds.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then use it.

JESUS
Some things hold longer than fear
says.

MARY MAGDALENE
I've seen it fail without warning.

PETER
So we're all guessing. Good to
know.

He looks from Mary to Jesus, caught between them.

PETER (CONT'D)
Useful place to be.

Mary steps around a smear of wax on the stones.

Peter notices and shifts around it too.

MARY MAGDALENE
That is why you move early.

The passage narrows ahead.

PETER
And if you move wrong?

MARY MAGDALENE
Then someone else pays.

EXT. OLIVE GROVE - DAY

Low trees cast thin shade as bread passes hand to hand,
followed by a clay cup.

For the first time, no one is pressed against a wall.

Mary sits with the others, the jar near her knee.

Peter bites into a fig and winces.

PETER
That could break a tooth.

JOHN, 20s, gentle and watchful, breaks it open and hands half back.

JOHN
Then stop fighting it.

A small laugh moves through them.

MARY MAGDALENE
Eat or complain.

PETER
I can do both.

JESUS
He can.

Another laugh.

Someone hums a low tune. Mary listens before she joins.

Peter taps the cup. John answers on a stone.

For a moment, the sound is not a warning.

A distant CLACK carries from the city.

The tune thins, but does not stop.

Then a WOMAN rushes in with a BOY fighting for breath.

WOMAN
They dropped a board. He ran.

The tune breaks.

The boy folds forward, breath high and sharp. His mother drops beside him and stops herself before she crowds him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Please.

MARY MAGDALENE
Give him room.

Peter and John move outward.

A man steps closer.

MAN
I'm helping.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then give him space.

The man backs off.

Peter starts to move too, catches himself, and widens the opening instead.

Jesus kneels in front of the boy.

JESUS
Look at me.

MARY MAGDALENE
Lower. Don't chase it.

The boy tries, but the breath stays high.

WOMAN
He's getting worse.

JESUS
Again.

The breath drops, barely.

Mary reaches too soon.

The boy jolts, and his breath climbs again.

Mary grips the jar cord.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Let him find it before you guide
him.

Mary lowers her hand.

The boy's breath drops again.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Feet under you.

Peter moves to lift him.

MARY MAGDALENE
Not yet.

Peter stops.

PETER
I'm trying to help.

MARY MAGDALENE
Too soon.

He lowers his hands.

At the edge, a man leans in, then checks himself.

WOMAN
I moved him too fast.

MARY MAGDALENE
You kept him near long enough.

WOMAN
Barely.

MARY MAGDALENE
Barely held.

The boy steadies.

BOY
I thought I was going down.

JESUS
You were close.

MARY MAGDALENE
Slow.

The boy follows her until the breath settles.

JESUS
Now stand.

The boy rises, shaken but upright.

His mother covers her mouth.

John offers him a small piece of fig.

JOHN
Small bite. Let your mouth remember
first.

From the city:

CLACK.

The boy flinches.

Jesus stays with him while the others turn toward the sound.

BOY
It's starting again.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then we move before they finish.

JESUS
To the side. No running.

At the edge, a young woman notices the white strip on Jesus' wrist and shifts away.

MARY MAGDALENE
You wait too long.

JESUS
Sometimes.

MARY MAGDALENE
People freeze.

From the city:

CLACK.

The boy tightens against his mother.

JESUS
Stillness is not freezing.

A beat.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Not always.

MARY MAGDALENE
Enough do.

JESUS
Then I stay long enough to see who doesn't.

Mary grips the jar cord.

MARY MAGDALENE
That gets you marked.

JESUS
So does walking past.

Peter shifts between them.

PETER
Good. So you are arguing.

JESUS
Yes.

MARY MAGDALENE

Good.

Jesus moves on, and Mary follows.

EXT. LANE OUTSIDE A BREAD STALL - DAY

A narrowing lane compresses around baskets, bodies, and a bread stall. Mary keeps to the side, tearing bread and slipping a piece into a beggar's sleeve as she passes.

MARY MAGDALENE

Eat while you move.

A soldier's boot clips a bowl, sending coins skittering across the stones.

Feet stop.

At the far end, a clerk lifts wax.

Jesus steps to the side first, giving the line somewhere to follow.

JESUS

Side first. Give it a side.

MAN

Easy for you to say.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then move before it closes.

She lifts the jar high enough for the line to see.

A woman turns first. The lane opens around the spill.

Peter scoops up the scattered coins and passes them back along the wall, his eyes on the raised jar.

PETER

So now it's the jar.

MARY MAGDALENE

It helped them see.

Farther back, a woman points.

WOMAN

Follow the jar.

Peter slows.

PETER
That's not the same thing.

Mary keeps the jar visible as bodies ease around the jam.

MARY MAGDALENE
They're following the opening.

PETER
Not from here.

The last coins reach the man who dropped them.

PETER (CONT'D)
You're not teaching anymore. You're
leading.

Mary's grip tightens under the clay rim.

Behind the grove boy, a woman shifts before pressure reaches her.

For a moment, the line moves without the jar.

CLACK.

Heads turn.

Mary almost lifts the jar higher.

Instead, she lowers it.

MARY MAGDALENE
Look at the space.

A man farther back takes it up.

MAN
Look at the space.

The lane starts moving again.

Mary lowers the jar the rest of the way.

Peter watches the line move without it.

The jar hangs at her side.

EXT. MARKET GRID - DAY

A wide crossing jams with stalls, baskets, poles, hanging cloth, and bodies moving in every direction.

No wall sits close enough to claim.

A man taps.

TAP. TAP.

Answers come back from three directions.

TAP. TAP.

TAP. TAP.

A child clamps his hands over his ears.

MARY MAGDALENE
Stop. Listen first.

The noise keeps spreading.

A woman spots daylight between two hanging cloths.

WOMAN
Here. Through here.

People turn toward it.

For a moment, the gap works.

Then a stall pole shifts, the cloth snaps tight, and the path folds inward before anyone can clear it.

A child is caught between stacked baskets.

CHILD
Mama.

His mother is three bodies back.

MOTHER
I see you. Stay up.

A man forces his arm in.

WOMAN
Don't push him.

The stall rope above them draws tight.

CREAK.

Voices collide across the grid.

VOICES

This way.
Move.
Wall side.

MAN

There is no wall.

The shift drives harder inward.

A shoulder knocks Mary into a post. She braces before the press can take the space around her.

MARY MAGDALENE

Hold where you are.

MAN

He's in there.

MARY MAGDALENE

I know.

WOMAN

Then move them.

Mary looks through stalls, poles, cloth, bodies, and gaps that vanish before they become paths.

No room to raise the jar.

MARY MAGDALENE

Not like this.

The push begins feeding itself.

Peter steps toward a slipping man, hand already reaching.

He stops.

Turns sideways instead.

PETER

Make space.

The man beside him looks lost.

MAN

Where?

Peter plants his shoulder against the press without grabbing anyone.

PETER
Beside you. Not over him.

The man checks himself.

Another body turns with him.

The mother starts forward, then stops herself.

MOTHER
Please. Tell me where.

Mary looks.

Across the grid, Jesus steps into the middle.

Bodies hit him, but he does not give ground. A shove turns into a brace, and a slipping man catches against the stillness.

MAN
I'm falling.

JESUS
Then stop moving into him.

The man freezes.

A woman turns sideways.

Another shoulder turns.

Then another.

The inward push breaks apart by inches.

PETER
There. Hold that.

A pocket opens before Mary can lift her hand.

MARY MAGDALENE
Give him air.

The baskets ease. Hands reach through without forcing the bodies around them, and the child is pulled free.

His mother folds over him.

MOTHER
I thought I lost you.

Jesus remains in the middle while the shape holds around him.

JESUS

Not all walls are stone.

The crowd eases outward.

PETER

They stopped.

Mary watches one sideways turn become another.

MARY MAGDALENE

No. They turned.

Nearby bodies are already turning early.

The space holds without her.

EXT. NARROW GRAIN CUT - DAY

A tight passage runs under sagging canvas as a woman drags a grain sack into the choke, bunching the line until the middle locks.

A child near the wall goes pale.

At the mouth, SHAPHAN stands with his tablet open while a clerk waits beside him with wax.

MARY MAGDALENE

Clear the side.

MAN

Give them room.

Bodies adjust just enough for two adults to guide the pale child to stone.

The clerk steps forward.

CLACK.

A woman stands sealed.

WOMAN

I did nothing.

Her daughter stands outside the opened space, close enough to see her and too far to touch.

DAUGHTER

Mama.

WOMAN

Stay back.

The girl reaches, but the empty space keeps her hand from finding her mother.

DAUGHTER

She's alone.

Mary starts toward the girl, and the opened space widens with her movement.

She stops.

MARY MAGDALENE

Stay where you are.

DAUGHTER

I can't reach her.

MARY MAGDALENE

You don't have to cross it.

Mary unwinds the cord from the jar and places one end in the girl's hand.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Hold this easy.

The cord pinches tight in the girl's fist.

Mary keeps her voice low.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Easy, or she feels your fear before your hand.

The girl loosens.

Mary stretches the cord across the opened space, and the mother takes the other end.

WOMAN

I have you.

The daughter's breath breaks, but the cord stays loose.

DAUGHTER

I have you too.

The woman moves with the line, separated but connected.

Shaphan marks the tablet.

SHAPHAN

Note that.

The clerk raises his stylus.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

Separation held.

MARY MAGDALENE

That is not what held.

Shaphan keeps writing.

The cord stretches between the daughter's hand and the mother's shaking grip.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

She did.

Shaphan's stylus pauses over the cord.

SHAPHAN

Fear teaches faster when it has a shape.

MARY MAGDALENE

So does mercy.

The clerk's stylus hovers.

Shaphan points to the cord.

SHAPHAN

Mark it.

The clerk lowers his stylus to the cord.

Then to Mary.

The daughter tightens her grip.

The sealed woman tightens hers back.

The cord holds between them.

Mary does not take it away.

EXT. NOTICE COURT NEAR THE TEMPLE - DAY

A paved square feeds into narrow lanes. A notice slate hangs from a post while Temple clerks take their places and a guard warms wax in his palm.

People arrive slowly, most drifting to the walls before they stop.

Mary holds the outside edge.

A little girl moves along the wall, palm flat to stone.

Shaphan stands near the post. The same Temple Clerk from the grain cut waits beside him.

A Senior Clerk steps forward and lifts the slate.

CRACK.

It strikes the post.

CRUSH.

Two witness lines sit beneath it.

The square stills.

SENIOR CLERK
By order of the Court.

He reads from the slate.

SENIOR CLERK (CONT'D)
Crush.

Murmurs move through the crowd.

WOMAN
Crush who?

SECOND WOMAN
Whoever they need.

MAN
Who named it?

The Senior Clerk continues.

SENIOR CLERK
Cause named. Gathering beyond
measure. Healings reported.
(MORE)

SENIOR CLERK (CONT'D)
 Movement through restricted lanes.
 Walls taken before command.

A man near the wall cannot hold it in.

MAN
 He healed my brother.

A clerk turns.

CLERK
 Name.

The man lowers his head.

CLERK (CONT'D)
 Say it if you want it written.

No one helps him.

The Senior Clerk lifts the slate again.

SENIOR CLERK
 Blessed are You who set order on
 the day and keep the many from
 swallowing the one.

TEMPLE CLERKS
 Amen.

The slate lowers.

SENIOR CLERK
 Mary of Magdala.

Heads turn.

A woman pulls her child behind her. A man near Mary shifts
 away before he seems to know he has done it.

WOMAN
 That's her.

SECOND WOMAN
 Don't stand too close.

The little girl keeps her palm to stone.

Space opens around Mary.

Shaphan opens his tablet.

At the back edge, JUDAS ISCARIOT stands watchful, rubbing a
 smear of wax from his finger until it spreads thinner.

A Temple Clerk near him lifts a stylus.

Judas closes his fist.

SHAPHAN

Step away from them, and the charge
rests.

Mary stands before the two witness lines.

Empty.

Waiting.

MARY MAGDALENE

You wrote it before I got here.

The guard's wax softens in his palm.

SHAPHAN

I wrote what the lanes remember.

MARY MAGDALENE

Lanes do not write.

SHAPHAN

People do.

He leaves the empty lines open.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

When they are ready.

The little girl's palm stays fixed to stone.

The witness lines remain empty.

MARY MAGDALENE

And if no one gives you a name?

SHAPHAN

Then fear has not come close
enough.

Judas works the wax deeper into his palm.

A Temple Clerk steps near him.

TEMPLE CLERK

You saw the lane.

JUDAS

I saw people standing.

TEMPLE CLERK
That is not what they asked.

JUDAS
It is what happened.

The clerk moves on.

Judas opens his hand.

Wax has worked into the lines of his palm.

He wipes it with his thumb.

It spreads.

He closes his fist over the wax.

EXT. WATER LANE - DAY

Bodies press forward faster than the front can clear.

The charge reaches the lane before Mary does.

People notice the jar first. A woman pulls her child closer.

WOMAN
That's her.

A man gives Mary room, checks the clerks, then moves back into line.

MAN
They named the jar.

Mary moves along the wall.

MARY MAGDALENE
Easy. Stay wide.

At the mouth, clerks wait with wax while Shaphan stands behind them, leaving the lane open.

A man taps.

TAP. TAP.

Too sharp.

MARY MAGDALENE
Wait. Listen first.

At the side mouth, a TEMPLE BOY keeps one hand low against the wall.

He taps.

TAP. TAP.

Clean enough to sound learned. Wrong enough to split the lane.

Mary sees the boy's eyes flick past her to Shaphan.

SHAPHAN

Is it yours or not?

MARY MAGDALENE

You know it isn't.

SHAPHAN

Then the lane should know.

Bodies start moving toward the false opening.

MARY MAGDALENE

Back to the wall.

Some bodies check. Others hold between the wall and the clerks, unsure which fear to obey.

MAN

If we follow you, they mark us.

MARY MAGDALENE

If you follow that, you fall.

The false call comes again.

TAP. TAP.

The middle pulls toward it.

A woman with a child stops halfway between the wall and the opening.

WOMAN

Which one?

Mary starts to lift the jar.

MAN

Don't lift that.

The jar stays down.

MARY MAGDALENE

Look at the space. Not me.

The lane splits against itself. A shoulder catches, a basket drops, and water spills across the stones.

Mary presses her palm flat to stone.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Wide. Slowly.

Farther down, Ruth takes it up.

RUTH

Wide. Slowly.

The words travel better than the jar.

Shaphan raises two fingers.

CLACK.

A wrist seals.

The lane recoils.

SEALED MAN

I stayed on the wall.

SHAPHAN

Then who moved you?

The sealed man turns toward Mary.

MARY MAGDALENE

Do not give him my name.

The sealed man presses his palm to stone.

SEALED MAN

Fear did.

Space opens around him, and the crowd nearly takes it.

MARY MAGDALENE

Do not take the empty space.

A woman pulls back from the gap and turns sideways.

WOMAN

Wide. Slowly.

The line steadies.

Shaphan moves to the woman with the child.

SHAPHAN
Who called the turn?

Mary looks to the child, not him.

MARY MAGDALENE
Keep her standing.

The woman lowers her head.

WOMAN
A wrong tap.

The Temple Boy slips through the side mouth.

Shaphan marks the tablet.

Mary faces the lane with the jar still low.

Bodies pass without using it.

Shaphan's stylus cuts another line.

SHAPHAN
The habit spreads.

The jar stays down.

EXT. BOARDED CUT THROUGH - DAY

Mary steps off the wall with Ezra.

Heads turn as she brings him to the board where a Temple Guard blocks the way.

Ezra tries to breathe quietly and fails.

TEMPLE GUARD
Posted.

MARY MAGDALENE
He will not hold that turn.

TEMPLE GUARD
Not through here.

MARY MAGDALENE
Look at him.

Ezra bends, fighting for air.

The guard stays on the board.

 TEMPLE GUARD
Witness.

 MARY MAGDALENE
You can see him.

 TEMPLE GUARD
Two witnesses.

A second clerk waits with a slate.

Ezra's breath breaks.

 MARY MAGDALENE
Open it.

 TEMPLE GUARD
The post holds.

 MARY MAGDALENE
He is ten.

 TEMPLE GUARD
And I am here.

A woman in line shifts toward Ezra.

 WOMAN
Let him through.

The guard does not move.

 TEMPLE GUARD
Witness.

The woman sees the clerk, the slate, the wax.

Her mouth closes.

 MARY MAGDALENE
He will not make it.

 TEMPLE GUARD
Then take him back.

Ezra reaches for Mary's sleeve and misses.

 EZRA
Mary... I lost it.

His knees give.

Mary catches him before he falls.

The board sits within reach.

Mary grips it.

Behind her, the lane presses closer. A shoulder hits her back, and the board creaks under her fingers.

Ezra's weight sags against her.

Mary looks at the board.

Then at the bodies closing behind them.

She lets the wood go.

MARY MAGDALENE

Come.

She pulls Ezra away.

After three steps, her knee dips under his weight.

Ezra sags harder, and Mary braces against the wall to keep him moving.

Across the boarded mouth, Judas stands on the far side while a Temple Clerk writes on a slate.

TEMPLE CLERK

No witness, no opening.

Ezra's broken breath carries across the cut.

JUDAS

He is a child.

TEMPLE CLERK

Then someone should have spoken sooner.

The clerk closes the slate and walks off.

Judas remains by the board as Mary carries Ezra away.

The wood holds.

The witness line stays empty.

Judas looks at the wax worked into his palm.

Across the cut, Ezra's breath breaks again.

Judas closes his fist.

EXT. CROSSING LANES / BLIND TURN - DAY

Two narrow lanes feed into each other at a blind angle while Mary works the side with Ezra close behind her.

Ahead, the passage bends hard around stone, with no view past it.

Bodies feed in from both sides until the front has nowhere to clear and the back still thinks it can move.

Mary pulls Ezra tight to the wall.

MARY MAGDALENE
Listen before you move.

EZRA
I am.

At the bend, a child is pinned between bodies, barely visible as pressure gathers around him.

CHILD
Mama.

His mother is trapped a few bodies back.

MOTHER
I'm here. Stay up. Look at me.

A man near the turn tries to push through.

MAN
Keep moving.

MARY MAGDALENE
Hold where you are.

MAN
We can't hold here.

MARY MAGDALENE
If you go in, the bend closes.

The child cries again.

The mother reaches toward Mary with nowhere to move.

MOTHER
Then tell us how.

Mary looks at the blocked mouths, the bodies too tight to turn, the bend already using every inch it has.

MARY MAGDALENE
Give him room before you reach him.

MAN
He's right there.

MARY MAGDALENE
And if you take the wrong step, he goes lower.

The child's cry pulls the man off his mark.

MAN
I'm taking him.

MARY MAGDALENE
Wait.

He drives in anyway.

For a moment, it works. His hand reaches the child's sleeve, and the mother nearly breaks toward them.

MOTHER
Yes. Bring him-

A foot slips on loose grit.

The bend folds under the sudden push. The man loses his footing as bodies surge around him, cutting the child from sight.

The mother's cry stops the lane harder than any command.

Mary holds Ezra against the wall.

EZRA
Mary, help him.

MARY MAGDALENE
If I go in now, I feed it.

EZRA
But he's down.

Mary's fingers press to stone.

MARY MAGDALENE
I know.

The pressure eases enough for a small gap to open at the bend.

The mother reaches the child first and drops beside him.

MOTHER

Look at me. Stay with me.

The man stands with the child's torn sleeve in his fist.

MAN

You knew.

A beat.

MAN (CONT'D)

You knew that would happen.

MARY MAGDALENE

I knew the lane.

A body shifts behind her, and the bend tightens again.

MAN

Not him.

Ezra looks at Mary.

EZRA

Did you?

Mary starts toward the child, then stops before her body narrows the gap.

She stays on the wall.

Across the lane, Shaphan stands with a Temple Clerk, tablet open.

SHAPHAN

Write it.

The clerk's stylus hangs over the mother, the child, and Mary before it marks the line.

MARY MAGDALENE

You closed every way out.

SHAPHAN

And still they chose one.

MARY MAGDALENE

You call it choice after you take the room away.

CLACK.

A wrist seals somewhere behind them.

People recoil, and a clean pocket opens.

No one uses it.

EZRA
There's room now.

MARY MAGDALENE
Too late is not room.

Behind her, a careful signal sounds.

TAP. TAP.

It comes again, patient enough to wait for bodies.

TAP. TAP.

A woman near the edge has made the call.

WOMAN
Slow. Turn slow.

A man behind her follows.

MAN
Give the bend room.

The lane begins to adjust without Mary's voice.

EZRA
You didn't tell them.

Mary keeps one hand on the wall as bodies begin to move around her.

MARY MAGDALENE
No.

A body brushes past her, and her hand starts to lift by habit.

Ezra sees it.

EZRA
Let them?

Mary lets the hand lower.

MARY MAGDALENE

Let them.

The careful turn holds, and the line keeps moving.

INT. BREAD ROOM - DAY

Low shelves line the walls. Thin coins sit under a weak lamp, and a cracked wrist strap rests in a bowl.

Mary ties two small loaves together. When the strap slips, she catches it and keeps going.

RUTH

We are thin again.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then we do not let it sit.

RUTH

Bread does not grow by moving.

MARY MAGDALENE

No. But it reaches someone.

Ruth rests one hand on the tied loaves.

Peter slips in, spent.

Mary reads him before he speaks.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

You fed the middle.

PETER

Yes.

The cracked strap rests in the bowl.

PETER (CONT'D)

Then I opened it.

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes.

PETER

And they took him.

The loaves stop in Mary's hands.

Peter stands over the strap.

PETER (CONT'D)
Tell me what that makes me now.

MARY MAGDALENE
Alive.

A breath almost breaks into a laugh.

PETER
That is not what I asked.

His fingers brush the strap and pull back.

PETER (CONT'D)
Then what am I useful for?

MARY MAGDALENE
Learning where to stop.

PETER
Then teach me how to stand.

Mary ties the next knot.

Ruth weighs the tied loaves in her hands.

RUTH
People ask which lane stays clear.

MARY MAGDALENE
None of them.

RUTH
Then what do I tell them?

Mary ties another bundle.

MARY MAGDALENE
Go early. Stay close. Do not wait
for me.

A knock.

Peter turns.

PETER
Don't open it.

Mary opens the door slightly.

A small slate leans against the post, with two witness lines
scratched into it and the top line wiped to a smear.

PETER (CONT'D)

A name.

MARY MAGDALENE

An attempt.

RUTH

Same thing now.

Mary rubs the smear once.

It does not come clean.

Across the lane:

CLACK.

The bundled bread presses tighter against Ruth's chest.

RUTH (CONT'D)

They are getting closer.

MARY MAGDALENE

They already are.

Peter lifts the slate.

PETER

They're learning our shape.

Mary shuts the door and turns the slate face down.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then we stop giving them one.

Ruth looks to the bundles.

RUTH

And bread?

Mary gives Ruth two tied loaves.

MARY MAGDALENE

Bread keeps moving.

EXT. LANE OUTSIDE THE BREAD ROOM - NIGHT

Judas stands in the narrow dark outside, close enough to hear movement through the door but not the words.

Farther down the lane, a bundle of bread passes from one hand to another.

Then another.

Judas remains outside.

A Temple Clerk appears at the corner.

TEMPLE CLERK
You know where they gather.

JUDAS
People need bread.

TEMPLE CLERK
People need doors that open.

The clerk comes close enough to lower his voice.

TEMPLE CLERK (CONT'D)
Your father's door still breathes
because no one has needed it yet.

Judas' breath catches once.

His hand tightens at his side.

TEMPLE CLERK (CONT'D)
Do not wait until they do.

The clerk leaves him with the door.

Another CLACK sounds somewhere nearby.

Judas' hand rises toward the latch.

The sound holds it there.

Down the lane, the bread keeps moving.

His fingers close around the latch.

Then loosen.

He does not knock.

INT. BREAD ROOM - NIGHT

Ruth waits by the bundled bread.

Mary keeps sorting.

The door does not open.

INT. LOW ROOM - NIGHT

A low lamp burns near the wall while, outside, a distant CLACK fades into quiet.

Mary, Jesus, and Peter sit with the day still on them. Peter's hands are dirty from the lane.

PETER

Tell me when to move.

MARY MAGDALENE

You know when. You just hate it.

PETER

I moved because she was right there.

MARY MAGDALENE

So was everyone behind her.

Peter looks at his hands.

PETER

I could see her face. I could hear her trying to breathe. Every part of me knew standing still was wrong.

MARY MAGDALENE

Make room before you reach.

PETER

And if there is no room?

MARY MAGDALENE

Then your hands wait.

PETER

That feels like leaving them there.

JESUS

Sometimes it is.

A beat.

JESUS (CONT'D)

And sometimes it keeps the lane from folding.

Peter rubs dirt from his palm. It smears deeper.

PETER

So help can still feel terrible.

MARY MAGDALENE
Yes.

PETER
Then what is it?

MARY MAGDALENE
Cost.

PETER
Whose?

MARY MAGDALENE
Everybody's.

The cord pulls taut.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
I am trying to get them through it.

JESUS
You are.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then say the rest.

Jesus looks at the cord in her hands.

JESUS
You keep them alive.

Mary waits.

JESUS (CONT'D)
But if they need you there every
time, the lane still owns them.

MARY MAGDALENE
Dead people learn nothing.

JESUS
No.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then do not ask me to let go while
they are still inside it.

JESUS
I am asking what happens when they
find the turn without you.

Peter looks between them.

PETER
That sounds like an argument.

MARY MAGDALENE
It is.

Outside, a footstep stops near the wall.

Then, faintly:

TAP. TAP.

A softer answer comes from farther down the lane.

TAP. TAP.

The cadence is close to Mary's.

Not hers.

The cord shifts in her hand.

Mary does not answer.

The outside signal passes through the lane.

Jesus says nothing.

Mary listens until it is gone.

EXT. BACK PASSAGE - DAY

Shade holds quiet along a narrow passage where Mary stands near the wall line.

TAP. TAP.

The call passes.

An uneven answer comes back.

TAP. TAP.

Two quick taps follow.

NEIGHBOR
That's wrong.

Mary lets the wrong call hang.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)

Then answer it.

Her hand rises.

Stops.

MARY MAGDALENE

Wait.

A Temple Boy passes, scratching a clean line across the wall mark.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Boy.

He keeps moving.

A cleaner signal comes back.

TAP. TAP.

The boy slows half a step, checking the sound rather than fearing Mary's voice.

Then he goes.

The passage holds without her.

NEIGHBOR

And if they miss it?

Mary steps off the wall line.

MARY MAGDALENE

They won't hear mine forever.

The neighbor looks at the space.

Then follows it.

INT. SCRIBE ROOM - NIGHT

An oil lamp burns in a tight room where slates are stacked along the wall and warm wax sweetens the air.

Shaphan wipes the edge of a tablet.

TEMPLE CLERK

The signal is moving.

SHAPHAN

Where?

TEMPLE CLERK

Corners. Wells. Narrow lanes.

The tablet takes the mark.

SHAPHAN

Names.

TEMPLE CLERK

No names.

SHAPHAN

Then damage.

The Prefect's Liaison enters with two Pharisees. Sandals scrape against the floor as the room makes space.

LIAISON

Rome wants quiet.

SECOND PHARISEE

Quiet holds when people fear it.

SHAPHAN

Crush.

PHARISEE

Who caused it?

SHAPHAN

No one yet.

The Liaison sets wax on the table.

LIAISON

Rome counts bodies, not reasons.

The wax slides closer to Shaphan.

LIAISON (CONT'D)

Bring witnesses.

The clerk draws two lines.

A distant CLACK.

LIAISON (CONT'D)

By dusk.

SHAPHAN

By dusk.

TEMPLE CLERK
And if silence holds?

Shaphan's finger rests between the empty lines.

SHAPHAN
It won't.

He turns the tablet toward them.

Corners. Wells. Feed lanes.

One point marks the middle.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)
Mark one. Clear the rest.

The clerk's stylus hovers over the point, then over the widening lines around it.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)
Write it.

Wax takes the line.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)
Mercy leaves no record.

A Pharisee looks at the marks spreading beyond Mary's name.

PHARISEE
Then close the lanes.

LIAISON
Rome calls it discipline.

The Temple Clerk looks at a smaller mark near Mary's name.

TEMPLE CLERK
The jar?

Shaphan looks at the mark.

From outside:

TAP. TAP.

A softer answer follows.

TAP. TAP.

Shaphan sets the stylus down.

SHAPHAN

Not the jar.

The room listens as the signal fades.

TEMPLE CLERK

And if they stand on their own?

Shaphan looks at the widening lines.

SHAPHAN

Then raise the cost.

Another CLACK.

The wax warms on the table.

EXT. LANE OUTSIDE THE SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Hard light fills the lane as a HEALED MAN opens and closes his hand.

HEALED MAN

I can feel it.

A neighbor steadies him.

NEIGHBOR

Easy. Stay close.

Across the lane, the Roman Captain stands with two soldiers while Jesus waits beyond the mouth.

Mary steps out.

The lane tightens around the sight of her.

CAPTAIN

Hold.

A soldier stops before his step breaks the lane.

Stillness settles through the bodies.

A man near the wall turns before pressure reaches him.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

They move before fear reaches them now.

MARY MAGDALENE

Fear still reaches.

The Captain turns toward Jesus.

CAPTAIN
And him?

Jesus waits beyond the mouth.

MARY MAGDALENE
He gives them a reason.

CAPTAIN
Harder to govern.

MARY MAGDALENE
Yes.

The lane holds around them.

The Captain does not enter it.

EXT. WORK YARD SIDE LANE - DAY

A narrow service lane runs along the work yard wall as a line moves past in controlled pieces.

Mara steps into Mary's path.

MARA
That girl's elbow.

MARY MAGDALENE
She stayed up.

MARA
That is not the point.

MARY MAGDALENE
It is the first one.

Mara touches the wax mark on Mary's jar.

MARA
They marked you.

MARY MAGDALENE
They marked the jar.

MARA
People see no difference.

Mary looks to the line moving past them.

MARY MAGDALENE
Let them see.

MARA
Names stick.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then stop saying mine like it
protects me.

Mara absorbs that.

The line moves past them, controlled and quiet.

MARA
People get taken, Mary.

Mary has no quick answer.

MARA (CONT'D)
Stop standing where they can call
your name.

MARY MAGDALENE
If I stop, they look for me anyway.

MARA
And when they come?

MARY MAGDALENE
Then you keep them moving.

MARA
Without you.

Mary says nothing.

The line passes along the wall.

MARA (CONT'D)
You tell everyone else to let go.

Mary's hand tightens around the cord.

MARA (CONT'D)
Then practice.

The cord shifts under Mary's fingers.

Mara steps aside.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

A wide square holds a loose ring around Jesus as he crouches in the dust, drawing a line and scattering dots around it.

JESUS
A sower went out.

The words ripple outward.

WOMAN
A sower went out.

A child mouths it.

Feet adjust, and the circle shifts while Mary keeps near the lane mouths.

A limping man near the middle tries to move out, but two shoulders turn in and stop him.

MARY MAGDALENE
Give him room.

A seam opens. The man slips through to the outside and catches his breath.

At the far side, the Roman Captain shifts with the bodies, then plants himself.

Jesus keeps drawing.

JESUS
Some fell on the path.

MARY MAGDALENE
They came to hear.

JESUS
They had to.

MARY MAGDALENE
They came to get out again.

A Temple Clerk drifts past with wax warming in his palm.

A man turns on Jesus.

MAN
Why talk like this?

JESUS
Straight words get used.

The man looks to the wax, the careful feet, and the bodies holding the ring.

MAN

Then how do we understand?

Jesus draws another scattered line in the dust.

JESUS

If I name the lane, they close it.

The man lowers his eyes to the dust.

Jesus shifts, and the white strip shows at his wrist.

A woman near the outside steps back.

Jesus taps low.

TAP. TAP.

From the sides:

TAP. TAP.

Bodies angle outward.

A child copies the turn before his mother can guide him.

A stranger steadies another stranger by the elbow, then lets go before it becomes weight.

Mary starts toward them.

Stops.

At the edge, a teen boy pushes forward.

BOY

Rabbi, my mother—

A Temple Guard catches his wrist.

GUARD

Witness.

BOY

Witness what?

GUARD

Say it.

The wax lifts.

Jesus steps closer.

Mary raises her palm low.

MARY MAGDALENE

Hold.

The circle tightens, then steadies.

Jesus faces the guard.

JESUS

He asked for help.

GUARD

Help makes crowds.

JESUS

Fear makes them faster.

The guard looks at the ring holding around them.

A woman pulls her child close.

WOMAN

Say nothing.

Jesus takes a coin and places it in the guard's hand.

JESUS

Take it. Let him go.

The guard closes his fist around the coin.

GUARD

You pay once.

He shoves the boy out.

The boy hits the wall and stays up.

Mary's palm stays low.

In the shade, Shaphan marks the tablet while the circle holds.

EXT. PACKED COURTYARD - DAY

A courtyard sits packed too tight to settle, with bodies pressing in uneven currents.

Mary works the side, guiding shoulders back to stone and keeping the edge from folding.

JESUS
Give it room.

He steps into the middle and sits.

The nearest bodies hesitate.

A man starts to step over him, then checks himself.

MAN
Move.

JESUS
There is room if you stop taking
it.

The woman beside the man turns sideways instead of pushing.

WOMAN
Hold there.

The press loosens through the middle.

Mary stays along the side, ready if the shift breaks.

Near the center, a boy is caught between two adults, his breath climbing fast.

BOY
Mama.

His mother is a few bodies back, reaching without room to reach.

MOTHER
I'm here. Stay up.

Mary searches the edge for a seam, but the wall is too far from him.

In the middle, the woman who turned sideways holds her place.

WOMAN
Don't push him.

The man behind her starts forward, then checks himself.

MAN
Give him the middle.

A small pocket opens around the boy before the pressure can fold back in.

The boy catches a breath.

His mother stops reaching.

MOTHER

That's it. Stay there.

A stranger steadies the mother by the elbow, then lets go before it becomes weight.

The pocket holds.

The boy stays up without reaching the wall.

Mary's hand stays low.

EXT. PACKED COURTYARD - LATER - DAY

The courtyard has thinned, and people peel away in smaller, steadier movements.

Mary remains near the exits, keeping the last bodies from catching on the way out.

Jesus comes to her.

MARY MAGDALENE

You can't do that in the middle.

JESUS

It held.

MARY MAGDALENE

Because they were watching you.

JESUS

They were watching space.

Mary plants her hand on the stone.

MARY MAGDALENE

If they trust that, they stop looking for the side.

JESUS

Maybe they stop needing one every time.

MARY MAGDALENE

Waiting breaks.

JESUS
So does pushing.

The last few bodies leave the courtyard without her voice.

MARY MAGDALENE
People get crushed while they
learn.

JESUS
Yes.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then who carries that?

JESUS
Not only you.

Mary's hand stays on the stone.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You don't have to carry all of it.

Jesus moves on.

Mary stays at the stone as the last open space holds without
her.

MONTAGE - CITY MOVEMENT - DAY

A bread line opens before shoulders touch.

Palms find stone early while a clerk warms wax nearby.

TAP. TAP.

The first call comes too loud. Heads turn the wrong way, then
stop before their feet follow.

A softer answer comes from farther back.

TAP. TAP.

The line corrects.

A stranger starts to speak.

STRANGER
Witness—

A mother cuts him off.

MOTHER
Don't give them one.

His mouth closes.

A strap seals nearby.

CLACK.

The line falters.

A woman reaches for the sealed man, catches herself, and shifts instead.

WOMAN
Stay with us.

Room opens without leaving him behind.

END MONTAGE

EXT. CITY WELL - DAY

Hard sun beats over the well as buckets thump and jars pass hand to hand.

Mary stands to the side with Mara and Ezra.

Ezra coughs once and swallows it. Mary starts toward him, but he steadies himself.

In the shade stand the Captain, Shaphan, a Pharisee, and an Enforcer with a reed tucked against his wrist.

The Captain sees the reed before the man speaks.

ENFORCER
Name.

The line tightens around Mary, but she stays still.

No one answers.

The Enforcer lifts the reed.

CAPTAIN
No.

The reed lowers.

ENFORCER
First name opens the well.

No one speaks.

A board drags across the lane.

WOOD THUDS.

People at the back turn away and feed another lane before panic can take them.

The Captain lets the turn finish.

ENFORCER (CONT'D)
Who told them?

CAPTAIN
They did.

At the far side, a limping man struggles while Jesus works him forward.

MAN IN LINE
Who does he think he is? God?

Peter stays close enough to help without feeding the press.

PETER
That is Jesus.

MAN IN LINE
That is not an answer.

Jesus makes room without taking it.

The line makes room around him.

Peter watches the space hold.

PETER
No.

He keeps watching.

PETER (CONT'D)
It is not.

A man near the middle starts the wrong way.

Ezra's hand lifts low.

EZRA
This side.

The man checks himself and shifts.

Two others follow.

Ezra waits for correction.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Was that right?

MARY MAGDALENE
It held.

Ezra keeps his hand low against the post.

The Enforcer looks from Ezra to Mary.

ENFORCER
There. Him.

The Captain steps across his sightline.

CAPTAIN
A boy found room.

ENFORCER
Someone taught him.

Mara looks at the moving line.

MARA
The street did.

Buckets keep passing hand to hand.

No one gives the Enforcer a name.

The line keeps moving.

EXT. MARY'S COURTYARD - DAY

Mary shuts the gate, and the noise outside dulls.

She sets the jar down. Dust streaks her mouth, and her wrist is raw where the cord rode it.

Mara stands with her.

MARA
It held.

MARY MAGDALENE
They moved.

MARA
I asked about you.

EZRA (O.S.)

Mary.

Mary looks at the jar.

MARA

He called your name. Not the jar.

Mary looks toward Ezra's voice.

Her hand returns to the cord.

A beat too long.

She lifts the jar anyway and goes.

EXT. NARROW LANE BETWEEN COURTYARDS - DAY

A thinner lane runs between courtyards, less crowded but still in motion.

Palms find stone before pressure reaches them.

Mary steps in with Ezra beside her and lets the line move on its own.

Ezra walks tight to the wall. His breath is thin, but it holds.

EZRA

I have it.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then keep it without gripping.

Ezra loosens his fingers.

Ahead, a child lifts his hand, hears the call ahead, and waits.

TAP. TAP.

Only then does he answer.

TAP. TAP.

EZRA

He listened.

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes.

At a crossing, the Roman Captain stands on the far side of the lane.

Mary stays on one side.

The Captain remains on the other.

Neither speaks.

The sound changes ahead.

The lane feeds toward a wider opening where more bodies crowd the way.

The Captain follows the sound before he follows Mary.

EXT. FESTIVAL DETOUR LANE - DAY

The lane runs hot and fast, pulling in two directions at once. A seam opens left while pressure builds right.

Mary reads one side, then the other.

Too many bodies are already choosing.

Ezra stays close, one hand searching for stone.

EZRA

Mary?

MARY MAGDALENE

Wait.

EZRA

Which side?

The right side opens for half a breath.

MARY MAGDALENE

Right side.

Bodies obey at once.

VOICES

Right.

Right side. She said right.

MARY MAGDALENE

Slow. Not all at once.

The words vanish under the movement.

The right side compresses into a narrow choke with no exit.
The left buckles behind them, and a woman catches hard
against a shoulder.

WOMAN

Ah!

MAN

You said right.

MARY MAGDALENE

I said slow.

Ezra's hand slips off the wall.

EZRA

Mary.

Bodies fold between them.

EZRA (CONT'D)

I can't find it.

MARY MAGDALENE

Find my voice.

EZRA

I can't.

His fingers search for stone that is no longer there.

Then he drops.

Feet keep coming.

MARY MAGDALENE

Ezra.

Mary drives toward him, but the line closes over the space
she sent them into.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Wait. Hold.

The back keeps pushing.

VOICES

Keep going.
She said right.

MARY MAGDALENE

Stop saying what I said.

A Temple Clerk pushes into the mouth of the lane.

TEMPLE CLERK
Crowd press.

MARY MAGDALENE
He's down.

The clerk already has the charge before he has the boy.

TEMPLE CLERK
Cause named.

Mary forces herself into the fold and gets one hand through.

Almost reaches Ezra.

The line drives inward and cuts her off again.

At the mouth, the Captain appears.

CAPTAIN
Back.

The bodies keep moving.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Back to the walls.

MARY MAGDALENE
They can't hear you.

The Captain plants his shield the way Mary plants her palm.

CAPTAIN
Then they'll feel it.

He drives in, forcing bodies outward until palms hit stone
and a narrow ring opens around Ezra.

A board slams across the mouth behind him.

WOOD THUDS.

The lane's guide cord tightens between the posts and holds
the ring.

Mary reaches Ezra and drops beside him.

Dust coats his lips. His breath is caught somewhere too deep.

MARY MAGDALENE
Ezra.

Jesus drops beside her.

JESUS

Mary.

The right side remains jammed in the choke she chose.

MARY MAGDALENE

I turned them wrong.

JESUS

Stay with him.

He lifts Ezra's chin.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Low. With me.

Mary stays close, one hand against Ezra's chest.

MARY MAGDALENE

Ezra. Stay.

Jesus keeps his hand steady.

JESUS

Again.

A thin breath catches, then breaks.

Mary starts to gather Ezra.

MARY MAGDALENE

I have him.

JESUS

Not yet.

Mary stays open-handed against Ezra's chest.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Let him find it.

A broken breath comes.

Then another.

Smaller. Lower.

MARY MAGDALENE

There. That's it.

Ezra's eyes open a fraction.

EZRA

Did I lose it?

Mary cannot answer quickly.

MARY MAGDALENE

No.

A foot shifts at the edge of the ring.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

I did.

Her hand slips from his chest before she puts it back.

The ring holds.

In the shade, Shaphan opens his tablet.

The Captain steps into his line.

CAPTAIN

This is what your line does.

Shaphan presses too hard into the wax.

SHAPHAN

She called the turn.

MARY MAGDALENE

And you closed every other one.

Shaphan raises the stylus.

SHAPHAN

Witness.

The clerk waits with a strap while the ring holds around Mary and Ezra.

No one gives a name.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

You heard her.

A woman lowers her head.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

You followed her.

A man presses his palm harder to stone.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

Say it.

The wax softens in the clerk's hand.

Still nothing.

The Captain does not move.

CAPTAIN
No witness.

Shaphan holds the stylus a beat longer.

Then lowers it.

The clerk lowers the strap.

Only then does Mary gather Ezra into her arms.

She stays down with him for one breath before lifting him.

People flatten to the walls.

MARY MAGDALENE
Let us through.

No one tells them how.

They make room.

Mary carries Ezra along the stone while the Captain stays at the mouth and the lane closes behind her.

Slowly, the bodies begin to move again.

EXT. SIDE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Low lamplight holds over the courtyard.

Ezra sleeps against the wall, breathing shallow but steady, while Mary sits beside him with her palm to stone.

Mara stands back.

MARA
You keep them standing.

Ezra's breath catches once in his sleep, then steadies.

MARA (CONT'D)
He keeps falling.

Mary's palm stays on the stone.

MARA (CONT'D)
I let you teach him because I
thought you were making him safer.

The wall takes more of Mary's weight.

MARA (CONT'D)
But he knows every wall in this
city and still does not know where
to rest.

Mary's hand tightens against the stone.

MARY MAGDALENE
He started again.

MARA
Because Jesus gave him room.

Mary's fingers stop.

MARA (CONT'D)
Say the rest.

Ezra sleeps between them.

MARY MAGDALENE
I read it wrong.

The words come rough.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
I heard them follow me. I heard
them say right, and then he was
gone.

Her hand moves against the stone.

MARA
I told you he was not one of your
lanes.

MARY MAGDALENE
I saw him go.

MARA
He is here.

A distant CLACK cuts through the courtyard.

Mary presses harder into the stone until dust shifts under
her palm.

MARA (CONT'D)
Mary.

Mary stays beside Ezra.

EXT. SIDE COURTYARD - LATER

Ezra sits upright against the wall with Mary beside him.

MARY MAGDALENE

Low.

He tries, but the breath stays high.

EZRA

I can't.

Mary almost corrects him.

Stops.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then stay with me.

He looks at her.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Just this one.

He pushes air out, thin and controlled, while Mary keeps one hand steady at his back.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Good.

Ezra waits to see if the breath will break again.

EZRA

Will it stay?

Mary keeps her hand at his back.

MARY MAGDALENE

Long enough.

She stays with him.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

No taps tonight.

Mary listens to his breath.

EXT. JUDAS'S FATHER'S STAIR - NIGHT

A narrow stair climbs to a door with one lamp burning above it. A pale line marks the stone at the threshold, and a waxed strap holds the door closed.

A neighbor brushes the line with her toes.

NEIGHBOR

Line.

She moves on.

Judas comes up the stair and stops short of the strap.

Inside, a wet cough.

FATHER (O.S.)

Judas.

JUDAS

I'm here.

He reaches for the strap, then presses his palm to the wood.

The wood is warm.

Another cough comes, followed by a thin scrape inside, as if his father has tried to stand and found the door instead.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Don't get up.

A Temple Clerk appears at the bottom of the stair.

TEMPLE CLERK

Evening.

Judas pulls his hand from the door.

JUDAS

He's sick.

TEMPLE CLERK

Then keep him in.

JUDAS

He needs air.

TEMPLE CLERK

Names before dusk. Boards after.

Judas' hand tightens at his side.

JUDAS

And if I give one?

The clerk steps up one stair.

TEMPLE CLERK

Then your door stays breathing.

Another cough comes from inside, worse than before.

Judas looks at the pale line around the threshold.

JUDAS

If he dies, who gets this door?

TEMPLE CLERK

The slate.

The clerk leaves him at the threshold.

FATHER (O.S.)

Don't become them.

Judas leans closer to the wood.

JUDAS

Then tell me where to stand.

Only the sick breath answers.

The pale line waits at his feet.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Everyone keeps telling me to stand
somewhere else.

He scrapes the line with his sandal.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Every place I stand already has a
line around it.

From somewhere below:

CLACK.

His foot scrapes the line again.

Only stone.

His hand rises toward the door.

The cough comes again.

His hand falls.

Judas leaves the stair.

EXT. SIDE LANE BELOW THE STAIRS - NIGHT

Low light fills the tight space, where a small line holds along the wall, quiet and careful.

Judas steps in.

Ahead, a man near the middle stumbles when a woman reaches too quickly, and the line tightens.

Judas' hand rises without confidence.

The man slips again.

TAP. TAP.

Too sharp.

Heads turn the wrong way, and pressure feeds inward.

WOMAN

Stone.

She turns first.

Space opens.

The man reaches the wall, breathing hard but upright.

Judas lowers his hand.

No one turns to him.

The woman passes.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Stay wide.

Judas presses his palm to the wall.

From farther down:

TAP. TAP.

He listens.

This time, he lets it pass.

The line continues.

JUDAS

Not mine.

From the lane above:

CLACK.

Judas turns toward his father's stair.

For one breath, he stays with the line.

Then he steps out of it and goes.

EXT. NARROW STAIR LANES - DAY

Tight stair lanes run under low light, with one passage choked by boards while another feeds too fast.

Temple Clerks hold the mouths of the lanes, spaced far enough apart to look casual and close enough to see every turn.

Mary keeps to the side, and the others follow, uneven but holding.

Peter notices one clerk watching the jar.

Another watches the white strip on Jesus' wrist.

A third looks only at the hands along the wall.

PETER

Which way?

MARY MAGDALENE

Wait.

JOHN

That is never the answer Peter likes.

PETER

I heard it.

A wrong signal cuts across from a side lane.

TAP. TAP.

Two in their group start to turn, but a woman ahead presses her palm to stone.

WOMAN

Wall.

Feet stop before the turn can spread.

At the bend, a man stumbles as the middle swells.
Mary steps off the wall, her hand raised but waiting.
A clerk's stylus lifts.
Mary sees it.
Her hand lowers.
The woman turns first.
Enough room opens for the man to find stone.

JESUS

Now.

They move.

A corner opens, then tightens again when a Temple Clerk appears at the far end with wax ready.

CLERK

Hold there.

The group stalls.

Peter shifts.

Mary looks to him.

He presses his palm to the wall before she can speak.

John follows.

The clerk watches Peter's hand, waiting for a call to write.

Peter says nothing.

In the passage beside them, a man turns sideways first.

A seam opens.

MARY MAGDALENE

Now.

They pass through.

At the stair up, a rope line waits while a guard holds the way.

GUARD

Up is closed.

Jesus steps forward.

JESUS
We're expected.

The guard studies the dust on them, the jar, the white strip, then Mary's raw wrist.

Behind him, a clerk opens a slate.

The guard lifts the rope.

They pass through, with Mary last.

The clerk's stylus follows her until the lane closes behind them.

INT. UPPER ROOM - NIGHT

Low lamplight holds over bodies sitting close around food barely touched.

Mary stands near the wall with her jar while Peter still breathes harder than he should, John rubs dust from his ankle, and Judas sits apart, staring at the door.

A faint CLACK carries from outside.

Peter stops breathing hard.

Judas keeps his eyes on the door.

JUDAS
You make it look like it holds.

MARY MAGDALENE
It held today.

JUDAS
Today is not much.

PETER
We're doing this now?

Jesus stands, removes his outer garment, and pours water into a basin.

He kneels before Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)
Rabbi...

JESUS
You walked far.

PETER
So did you.

Jesus reaches for Peter's foot, but Peter pulls it back.

PETER (CONT'D)
You do not have to.

JESUS
I know.

PETER
It's filthy.

JOHN
So are the rest of us.

Peter's answer dies as Jesus takes his foot and lowers it into the basin.

JESUS
Then it is time.

The water darkens around Peter's foot.

Peter lets his foot settle.

Jesus moves down the line with water, cloth, and quiet, washing each of them the same.

When he reaches Judas, the bench tightens under Judas's hand.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Judas.

JUDAS
Rabbi.

Jesus lowers Judas's foot into the basin.

The water darkens around it.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
You do this like I am clean.

JESUS
No. Like you are here.

Judas grips the bench.

Jesus finishes, returns to the table, and breaks bread.

He places it into their hands.

Peter.

John.

The others.

Judas.

Jesus keeps a piece in his own hand.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Take this.

They do.

JESUS (CONT'D)
When they break me, remember what I
gave you.

No one eats.

Jesus lifts the cup.

JESUS (CONT'D)
When they use blood as proof,
remember this cup.

The cup passes from hand to hand.

Jesus offers it to Judas.

Judas drinks.

Jesus sets the cup down.

JESUS (CONT'D)
One of you will hand me over.

Peter's hand closes around the bread.

John's thumb presses into the bread in his palm.

Mary grips the jar cord.

PETER
Who?

Jesus looks at the bread in their hands.

JESUS
Eat.

No one moves.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Do not let fear teach you what this
table means.

Outside:

CLACK.

Judas rises and moves to the door, setting his palm against
the wood.

His fingers press the wood the way they did at his father's
door.

MARY MAGDALENE
Judas.

Judas keeps his hand on the door.

JUDAS
There was a line at his door.

Mary keeps hold of the cord.

Another CLACK outside.

Judas opens the door and leaves.

The door closes behind him.

Peter starts up.

PETER
We go now.

No one moves.

PETER (CONT'D)
He took your bread with him.

John touches the bread still whole in Peter's hand.

JOHN
You have not eaten what he gave
you.

Peter looks down.

The bread sits untouched in his hand.

Jesus gathers them with his voice.

JESUS
We sing first.

A low tune rises into the room, fragile at first, then held by more voices until it fills the space Judas left behind.

Voices fall away one by one.

Jesus turns to the door.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Now we go.

EXT. GARDEN OUTSIDE THE CITY - NIGHT

Olive trees, a low wall, and wind through the leaves.

Mary holds the gate with the jar at her hip, the skin of her hand raw where the cord has worn it.

Jesus and the others come along the wall.

MARY MAGDALENE
They're shifting boards.

JESUS
They'll come.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then we move before they do.

JESUS
Mary.

MARY MAGDALENE
What?

JESUS
Not everything can be moved around.

MARY MAGDALENE
Then what do you do with it?

JESUS
Stand where it reaches you.

MARY MAGDALENE
That is how they take you.

JESUS
No.

He looks toward the trees.

JESUS (CONT'D)

That is how they see I stayed.

Peter and John move to the edges while Mary keeps the gate.

Torches appear beyond the trees.

For half a breath, Mary sees the lower lanes still open.

Then Judas steps through the light.

Behind him, a TEMPLE CAPTAIN leads Temple Guards and Roman soldiers through the trees.

TEMPLE CAPTAIN

Jesus of Nazareth.

JESUS

You came.

Judas cannot hold his eyes on Mary.

MARY MAGDALENE

Judas.

JUDAS

They drew the line around his door.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then you brought them here.

JUDAS

I brought them where he said he would stand.

Peter looks to Jesus.

Jesus does not deny it.

They seize Jesus and bind his wrists.

Peter surges.

Mary lifts her hand.

MARY MAGDALENE

Peter.

One foot off the wall, Peter holds himself there until his hand opens at his side.

A Temple Guard raises wax.

TEMPLE CAPTAIN

No wax.

ROMAN SOLDIER

Move him.

The wax lowers.

They turn Jesus toward the city.

Mary and the others fall in along the wall.

Ahead of them, boards drop in the lower lanes.

WOOD THUDS.

Mary moves too quickly from mouth to mouth.

Each one closes before she reaches it.

Her hand shifts on the jar cord.

No signal comes.

MARY MAGDALENE

There was a way.

Peter looks at the closed mouths.

PETER

Where?

Mary keeps looking.

The boards hold.

The lower lanes stay closed.

MARY MAGDALENE

There was.

INT. TEMPLE RECORD HALL - NIGHT

Lamplight falls over slates.

A slate lands with a CLACK.

Two witness lines wait empty.

A Senior Scribe sits with Shaphan beside him as Jesus is brought in.

SHAPHAN

Name.

Jesus gives him nothing.

A Clerk lifts wax.

Shaphan raises two fingers.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

Record it.

The wax lowers.

A Temple Clerk enters quickly.

TEMPLE CLERK

People moved for him.

SENIOR SCRIBE

Witnesses.

TEMPLE CLERK

No one spoke.

Shaphan sets down a second slate.

CRUSH.

The Senior Scribe reads it.

SENIOR SCRIBE

You call this order?

SHAPHAN

It cleared the lane.

SENIOR SCRIBE

A child nearly died.

SHAPHAN

The lane remained usable.

The empty witness lines stay clean.

Shaphan presses his thumb into the wax.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

Name it enough times, and the city
stands around it.

Outside, faintly:

TAP. TAP.

One clerk flinches before he catches himself.

Shaphan presses harder into the wax.

No one in the room moves.

SHAPHAN

Send him to Rome at first light.

The Senior Scribe looks at the empty witness lines.

SENIOR SCRIBE

On what charge?

Shaphan pulls his thumb from the wax.

The mark is too deep.

SHAPHAN

The one they learn by seeing.

A beat.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

Put him at the festival gate before dawn.

The Clerk leaves.

Jesus stands before the empty witness lines.

SHAPHAN (CONT'D)

Let them see the cost.

EXT. PRAETORIUM STEPS - DAY

By morning, the city has tightened around every road to the square.

Pilate stands above the crowd while soldiers hold a line and boards lean near the lanes below.

Mary holds the outer seam with her palm to stone.

A chant starts to rise as bodies drift inward.

A board slides.

WOOD THUDS.

The crowd compresses.

MARY MAGDALENE

Stone.

The nearest bodies stop. The middle thins by inches.

Pilate follows the movement.

Shaphan writes.

TEMPLE OFFICIAL

If you release him, the city moves
for him.

A shout begins.

VOICE

King-

It dies before it can gather.

Pilate raises a hand.

PILATE

Say the charge plain.

Dust shifts under Mary's palm.

TEMPLE OFFICIAL

He claims rule.

Pilate faces Jesus.

PILATE

Do you?

JESUS

I teach. I heal. I tell people they
can stand.

Pilate turns back to the square.

PILATE

No Roman charge.

The lanes hold by inches.

The crowd stays quiet.

Pilate looks to the boards.

PILATE (CONT'D)
Bring one.

A board is carried in and set at the opening.

The nearest shoulders draw in.

The passage narrows.

Pilate lets them feel the narrowed pass.

PILATE (CONT'D)
You want quiet.

He looks from the officials to the crowd.

PILATE (CONT'D)
Then take him.

Temple officials exhale.

PILATE (CONT'D)
Proceed.

Shaphan writes.

SHAPHAN
Custody transferred.

The opening narrows as Jesus is moved down.

Peter reaches the seam beside Mary.

PETER
Tell me to move.

MARY MAGDALENE
You know where.

PETER
I know where. I don't know how to
stay there.

Mary sees his hands closing.

MARY MAGDALENE
With your hands open.

The Roman Captain steps into the choke.

CAPTAIN
Keep it open.

The first bodies obey too sharply.

Mary does not move in.

The Captain sees the bunching and shifts half a step back.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Open.

The passage breathes just enough.

Jesus is taken through.

Pilate turns away.

Mary holds the seam.

EXT. CITY WAY TO THE HILL - DAY

Midday heat presses into the narrow streets as Jesus is driven forward under the weight of the beam.

Boards choke the intersections, forcing the crowd to the sides where hands stay down and mouths stay shut.

A Temple Clerk lifts wax, searching for a break.

CAPTAIN

Forward. Keep it moving.

The wax lowers.

Mary keeps the side open wherever feet begin to slip.

Jesus stumbles under the beam. His hand finds the wood, and he pulls one low breath before he steadies himself and moves again.

Bodies press inward from both sides.

At an intersection, a board shudders.

A soldier steps into the seam.

ROMAN SOLDIER

Back.

The crowd stalls.

MARY MAGDALENE

Wall.

Palms meet stone.

Pressure rolls outward until a narrow path opens.

A man in the middle stumbles, unable to reach the side.

Peter's foot leaves the wall.

He stops himself.

Plants again.

PETER

Side. Turn here.

He braces the line.

A woman turns, and the bodies behind her follow the angle.

The man reaches stone, breathing hard but upright.

Peter holds where he is.

His breath leaves him once.

Mary grips the jar cord.

Peter does not reach for the man.

He holds the space.

PETER (CONT'D)

I hate this.

MARY MAGDALENE

I know.

PETER

It worked.

Mary looks ahead as Jesus is driven forward again.

MARY MAGDALENE

I know that too.

Peter stays on the wall until the last bodies clear.

Then he moves with Mary toward the hill.

EXT. HILL OUTSIDE THE CITY - DAY

Open sky and hard light.

Three uprights stand in the ground while a rope line holds the crowd and soldiers space themselves along it.

Jesus is brought forward, and the beam drops into the dirt.

Mary stands with the women, Mara beside her, as a younger woman stares ahead and a Temple Clerk circles with wax warming in his hand.

A hammer lifts.

MARY MAGDALENE
Stay together.

The women shift closer, but the younger woman does not move.

The hammer falls.

The strike carries across the hill.

Another follows.

The younger woman bends.

MARA
Mary.

Mara reaches for her.

Mary's hand rises with Mara's, then stops before it adds weight.

Another strike carries.

Mary's hand opens at her side.

MARA (CONT'D)
Tell me where to put my hands.

Mary looks at the younger woman, the rope, the soldiers, the sky.

MARY MAGDALENE
I don't know.

Mara looks at her.

MARA
Mary.

MARY MAGDALENE
I don't know.

The younger woman folds lower.

YOUNGER WOMAN
I can't stand.

MARY MAGDALENE

Then lean.

YOUNGER WOMAN

On what?

Mary looks to Mara.

MARY MAGDALENE

On us.

Mara steadies the younger woman without pulling her off balance.

CAPTAIN

Hold the line.

Soldiers brace it outward, and the women draw closer as the cross rises.

Mary takes one step toward him, but a spear bars the space.

She returns to the women.

MARY MAGDALENE

Stay with me.

The women gather tight.

The Temple Clerk lifts wax.

TEMPLE CLERK

Witness.

No one speaks.

At the edge of the rope, the clerk turns to Shaphan, who stands apart with his tablet closed.

The women stay together.

The clerk waits.

Shaphan's thumb rests against the tablet edge.

Nothing opens.

SHAPHAN

No entry.

The clerk hesitates, then lowers the wax.

CAPTAIN

Keep it open.

The clerk steps back.

Mary plants her feet as Mara steadies the younger woman and another woman grips Mary's sleeve.

The women hold.

EXT. GARDEN TOMB - DAY

Cool stone, folded linen, and the head cloth set apart.

Mary stands at the threshold with two women behind her as light crosses the floor.

JESUS (O.S.)

Mary.

Jesus stands in the dim, a white strip at his wrist.

Mary's palm finds the doorway stone as the women begin to move behind her.

She lifts her hand and holds the opening.

One woman places her palm to the stone. The other waits beside her.

The way stays clear.

MARY MAGDALENE

They sealed you.

JESUS

They tried.

MARY MAGDALENE

Rabbi.

She steps toward him.

JESUS

Do not hold me.

Her hand lowers against the cool stone.

From outside, faintly:

TAP. TAP.

Her breath drops without effort.

MARY MAGDALENE

They will come for this.

JESUS

Then go before they name it.

A quiet space remains between them.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Go.

Mary's hand falls away from the stone.

She steps back from the threshold.

The women move around her without rushing, without needing a signal.

The doorway stays open behind her.

Mary turns toward the daylight.

MONTAGE - CITY LANES - DAY

A child lifts his hand to tap, hears the noise ahead, and waits.

The softer answer comes first.

TAP. TAP.

Only then does he answer.

TAP. TAP.

The line moves.

A board drops across a lane.

WOOD THUDS.

The line bunches, then peels outward before it can lock.

CLACK.

A strap seals a wrist, opening space around the marked person.

The line widens without leaving him behind.

Ezra stands at the edge, breath thin but steady.

A man stumbles inward.

Ezra waits for the softer answer.

TAP. TAP.

Then he moves.

He turns enough space for the man to find stone.

EZRA
Feet under you.

The man steadies.

Ezra takes one breath with him.

Mary stands back from the wall as the movement passes her.

A seam opens before pressure can gather.

Her hand rises by habit.

A woman turns before Mary can guide her.

Mary lets her hand open.

The movement passes without her.

Farther down:

TAP. TAP.

An answer returns.

TAP. TAP.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE LANES - DAY

Open sky over the city.

A sparrow lifts from a rooftop, dips once, then catches air and steadies.

Far below:

CLACK.

The sound fades.

Then softer:

TAP. TAP.

An answer returns.

TAP. TAP.

Another answer follows, farther off.

TAP. TAP.

A child answers last.

TAP. TAP.

The sparrow clears the rooftops.

FADE OUT.