

Salome

When Jesus left after the evening meal, we knew whatever was going to happen would be soon. When one of the disciples finally returned, he was alone. Jesus had been arrested. We stood in the streets and heard the whip hit his back, watched as he carried the wooden cross to Golgotha wearing that stupid crown of thorns. Would he save himself from the cross? Mary Magdalene, Jesus's mother and I edged closer and closer and saw him looking at us. Three hours we waited until he shouted the words "it is finished." Jesus was gone. It was over. They laid him in a tomb, and I went to collect spices to put on his body. But it was too late. Sabbath was coming, and the spices would have to wait. That Sabbath was so quiet. We were so afraid. We were so lost. Our lives had become all about Jesus, and now he was gone.



Beloved

Jesus called me the one he loved, but I ran just as fast as the rest of the disciples. I ran when I saw Judas turn up with the crowd of men. I ran when I saw their swords. I was scared they would take me too. I didn't stand up in court or plead with Herod or Pilate. For 3 years, he was my family, and I did nothing. The crowds in Jerusalem were thick with people. I followed at a distance, keeping my head down. I saw the men with gold coins for those who shouted "crucify," and I did nothing. Why am I so afraid? I can see him looking from the cross for his friends. I got near enough to see his mother and the women. He wanted to say something to me. He told me that I am to take his mother as my own and that she is to take me as her son. Even as he left, he gave me a new family.



Centurion

We got handed this man straight from the steps of Pilate's house. He'd been whipped already, but he was still standing. Pilate looked irritated. This was the crowd's decision, not his. It was about half a mile to Golgotha, but we didn't think he'd make it. The crowd was crazy. There were a few weeping, but most of them were shouting abuse and spitting in his face. He had this good robe on and a crown of thorns. We gambled for the robe and put up a sign saying "King of the Jews." The Jews didn't like that. He was nailed up to the cross as the sky went black. It was midday. He didn't say much up there, and he didn't last long. But he asked God to forgive us and said we didn't know what we were doing. When he died, I realised this was no ordinary man: We'd killed the son of God.

