

THE CHOSEN

Episode #205

"Spirit"

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TEASER

500 EXT. RURAL COUNTRYSIDE - ESTABLISHING - DAY 500

Gently hilly countryside between Jericho and Jerusalem. Lush grass, volcanic rock, trees, and birds bisected by a dirt road.

501 EXT. CITRUS GROVE - SAME 501

MARY MAGDALENE picks lemons in a grove of citrus trees alongside the road. She recites a blessing over fruit trees, referring to NOTES for prompts --

MARY MAGDALENE

Blessed are You, Lord Our God, King
of the Universe, whose world lacks
nothing...

Mary places the lemons in an apron-like shawl.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

...and who made wondrous creatures
and good trees, through which he
brings pleasure to the children of
Adam.

Mary smells one. It smells great but...

REVERSE shows the skin pocked, gross.

Mary shrugs it off. Returns the fruit to her apron/basket. Shuffling through notes, she rehearses a new passage --

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

If I ASCEND to heaven, You are
there. If I MAKE my bed in the
depths, you are there.

She tries it with a different inflection --

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

If I ascend to heaven, YOU are
there. If I make my bed in the
depths, you are...

Mary trails off. Something has her attention. A beat and we HEAR it -- horse hooves. Steady clip. Coming this way.

MARY POV -- A ROMAN SOLDIER on horseback rises into view cresting a hill. She swallows hard, heart beating out of her chest.

Roman Soldier disappears into a gully. Quickly approaching the next rise...

Mary turns, RUNS into the trees. The lemons fall from her apron, scatter. The last thing on her mind.

She keeps running, through tall grass. Up a slope.

There, Mary collapses. She scoots her body behind the crest. Catches her breath before daring to peak out --

ON THE ROAD, Roman Soldier sits atop his horse at the edge of the grove where Mary picked lemons moments ago. He SCANS the horizon.

Mary ducks back behind cover. Her lip curls in fear. She tries to keep from hyperventilating for what feels like eternity. Until --

OFF - HORSE HOOVES approaching. Mary clenches her hands. She steels herself and takes a look --

ON THE ROAD, Roman Soldier greets ROMAN SOLDIER 2. Casual. Two colleagues meeting up. A beat of LAUGHTER.

Mary WATCHES the soldiers spur their horses into a trot and head off down the road together.

Mary sinks, goes limp. She catches her breath. A beat and she looks down, SEES --

The notes. Crumpled into balls. Tears pool in her eyes at the sight and we --

END TEASER

ACT ONE

502 FADE IN ON: 502

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX

503 INT. JERUSALEM TEMPLE - CHAMBER OF OILS - DAY 503

In the Chamber of Oils within the Temple courts, YANNI and SHMUEL interrogate a frantically pacing JESSE.

As if repeating the question --

YANNI

Did he tell you his name?!

JESSE

Jesus.

YANNI

Jesus who? From where?

SHMUEL

Lineage? Origin?

JESSE

His favorite food... He told me his name. That's it.

YANNI

There were a million Jews here for the Festival, thousands named Jesus.

SHMUEL

Sit down, Jesse.

JESSE

With all due respect, Rabbi, I sat for 38 years.

YANNI

Tell us exactly what he said.
(off Jesse's look)
Again!

JESSE

He told me to go and sin no more,
that the results of sin are far
worse than being crippled.

YANNI

And to pick up your mat.

JESSE

(after a beat)
When he healed me, yes. He found
me later as well.

SHMUEL

Was anyone with him?

JESSE

Three men.
(searching his memory)
One was taking notes.

Shmuel slaps the table as if he just solved the case. Yanni
throws Shmuel a skeptical glance.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I think another said a few words to
me as Jesus disappeared. I barely
heard anything -- my LEGS!

Jesse trails off, lost in the memory, reverie.

SHMUEL

Jesse?

JESSE

(back to the present)
The other said something. And by
the time you finished yelling at
me, they were all gone.

SHMUEL

Think! What did he say?

Jesse racks his brain. Then, uncertain --

JESSE

They were going to see
Jesus'...cousin? I think.

Shmuel turns to Yanni with urgency.

SHMUEL

It was him. It was Jesus of
Nazareth

JESSE
Nazareth?

Off Yanni's skeptical look --

504 EXT. JERUSALEM TEMPLE - COURTYARD - DAY 504

Jesse exits the temple into the sunlight. He's just been put through the ringer but nobody can dampen the bigger truth -- His legs work. He was touched by God.

Jesse enjoys the sunlight on his face, his legs. Enjoys it so much he doesn't notice the figure following him... Atticus. He eats a treat from a street vendor as he follows.

505 EXT. JERUSALEM - STREET - MOMENTS LATER 505

Jesse pauses for a cart to pass. Atticus finishes his snack and comes up behind Jesse.

ATTICUS
Jesse?

Jesse turns -- a Roman? In regular clothes?

JESSE
Yes? How do you know my name.

ATTICUS
The word's out. So, it's true then. You're on your feet.

JESSE
Are you Roman?

ATTICUS
Does my accent give me away?

JESSE
I already told the Sanhedrin all I know.

ATTICUS
(chuckles)
I was born Roman, yes, but I'm just a man. I had to see with my own eyes.
(moves closer, aside)
I think it was a miracle.

Jesse nods. A nervous beat, then --

JESSE
I know it was.

ATTICUS
Uff. Life changing...but
forbidden. You must want to shout
from the rooftops.

JESSE
I do.

ATTICUS
Do you at least...have anyone close
to share the good news with?
Friends? Family?

JESSE
I encountered my brother almost
immediately after leaving the pool.

ATTICUS
Incredible! What did he think?
(off Jesse's hesitation)
It's safe. You can tell me.

JESSE
He believes the man responsible **has**
to be...our Messiah.

Atticus smiles. Jesse smiles. They share smiles. Not
literally.

506	EXT. CAMPSITE - Z'S CAMP - DAY Simon Z PRAYS.	506	*
507	EXT. CAMPSITE - Z'S CAMP - LATER Simon Z performs qigong-like breathing exercises. Deliberate. Precise.	507	*
508	EXT. CAMPSITE - Z'S CAMP - LATER Simon Z goes through his ATTACK routine with focus and control, like the master he is. He may be exiled from the catacombs but he clings fast to his old way of life.	508	*

509 EXT. CAMPSITE - Z'S CAMP - DAY

509 *

Simon Z prepares food. The embers of his fire glow gray and orange. He puts his hand over them and feels the weak warmth.

He adds some wood from a neatly stacked PILE left by the thoughtful travelers who used this campsite before him...

Simon Z returns to food prep when -- a HOWL interrupts him.

He instinctively grabs his dagger, listens --

A LOW GROAN grows in intensity into another HOWL. Someone in pain? Rage? Fear? Simon Z follows the sound.

510 EXT. FOREST - Z'S CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

510 *

From a perch in the low branches of a tree, Simon Z watches a STAGGERING MAN careen along a dirt path. Simon drops down soundlessly.

ON THE MAN -- walking, pained. Every step excruciating.

Simon Z appears behind a tree. He SCURRIES to next. Stealthily keeping pace with the man. Making no sound when --

The Staggering Man suddenly freezes. Simon Z watches expectantly. Without turning --

STAGGERING MAN

It can smell you. So, I can smell you.

He turns to see Simon Z who steps out from his cover, dumbfounded.

STAGGERING MAN (CONT'D)

Come no closer.

Simon Z's surprise turns to mild amusement. He approaches.

SIMON Z

How did you know I was following you?

STAGGERING MAN

The demon that possesses me knew.
(re Simon Z approaching)
Please! It will hurt you.

SIMON Z

That won't be easy.

STAGGERING MAN
If you can kill me...do it!

This stops Simon Z in his tracks. He looks closely. The man appears utterly hopeless, defeated -- and exhausted. His foot is clearly broken.

SIMON Z
Are you a Roman?

STAGGERING MAN
No.

SIMON Z
Tax collector?

Staggering man shakes his head, no.

STAGGERING MAN
Please!

SIMON Z
Your body is temporal. A demon will go on, pass through the waterless places, and find someone else. If you're strong enough to have lucid moments, it's safer in you.

Simon Z sheathes his dagger, his final word on the matter.

SIMON Z (CONT'D)
Until you find someone who can truly help, God bless you.

Turning to go, Simon Z's eyes stick on terrible red scarring on the underside of Staggering Man's forearms.

STAGGERING MAN
It makes me cut myself.

SIMON Z
Would you believe, this isn't the strangest thing that's happened to me in the past week?

Staggering Man is compelled forward. Sniffing then recoiling.

STAGGERING MAN
There's a smell on you. Something vile.

SIMON Z

Hmm. I hugged my brother goodbye
yesterday at the end of the feast.
He'd been lying in a pool of his
own--

STAGGERING MAN

Is he a...
(the word hurts in his
mouth)
...**holy** person?

SIMON Z

Not for a long time.

STAGGERING MAN

It has a bad feeling about you.

Simon Z considers this for a beat. Smiles.

SIMON Z

Thank you.

He turns on his heel and walks away leaving the Staggering
Man in agony.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

511 EXT. JORDAN RIVER - DAY

511

JESUS, SIMON, ANDREW, and PHILIP walk along the river's edge.

ANDREW

He said after the Feast we could find him near the Jordan outside Jericho.

SIMON

Yeah, well we passed Jericho awhile ago.

JESUS

Near is a relative term.

PHILIP

John's never where you expect him to be.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Boo.

John the Baptist steps out from behind a bush, scaring the living daylights out of Simon who leaps backward in shock.

Andrew squawks joyously and embraces JtB, Philip joins the group. John the Baptist spots Jesus.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

Hello cousin.

John practically flings the others away as he and Jesus embrace. He then holds Jesus's face and proclaims with glee.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

I heard about the scandal at The Pool! I LOVE IT!

JESUS

I figured you would.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

They're gonna come after you so hard for that!

JESUS

(sizing him up)

I see you're still not eating meat.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 Oy, the hassle of it all.
 (to Simon)
 You're Andrew's brother, yes?

SIMON
 Simon, yes.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 John. But you can call me
 "creepy."

John quickly winks at Andrew as Simon freezes. As Simon starts to protest --

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)
 Listen, we don't have much time.

PHILIP
 Time?

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 I left Jacob and the rest of the
 followers in Jericho to preach
 repentance, I have to get back to
 Jerusalem.

JESUS
 Jerusalem?

ANDREW
 We were all just THERE.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 You didn't hear the news?

SIMON
 What.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 Herod divorced Phasaelis, and is
 marrying Herodias, his brother's ex-
 wife. Someone has to call them out
 on that filth.

Jesus sighs. He turns to his followers.

JESUS
 Good men, will you give me a moment
 with my cousin?

As the others retreat --

512 EXT. JERICHO CAMPSITE - DAY

512 *

Mary and Ramah pour over a parchment. Ramah makes notes on a wax tablet.

RAMAH
(tentative)
"O Adonai, my God, in you..."

She's stuck on the next word.

MARY MAGDALENE
(pointing)
The root is these three characters:
het, samek, heh,

RAMAH
"To seek refuge" But there's no
heh.

MARY MAGDALENE
It's swallowed up in the ending
characters.

RAMAH
Why does it do that?

MARY MAGDALENE
Well...th-the end characters are...
It's defining the action as...
(sighs, frustrated)
I can't remember the rule.

RAMAH
It's okay.

MARY MAGDALENE
No, it's really frustrating. I
know this.

RAMAH
Let's take a break.

MARY MAGDALENE
No!

Mary takes a sharp drink of water. After a beat.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

RAMAH
"From my pursuers and deliver me,
lest they...cut---a lion..."

MARY MAGDALENE

"Tear, not cut," and notice that
the lion is NOT RECEIVING the
tearing but is DOING the tearing;
the caph is the hint at that..

While Ramah goes on reading, Mary takes another aggravated
sip of water.

RAMAH

Lest like a lion they tear my soul
apart...

513 EXT. JERICHO CAMP - MEN'S SIDE - SAME

513 *

Across the camp, in the men's section, THOMAS cuts a cucumber
while keeping an eye on --

MATTHEW, watching the lesson.

MATTHEW POV of Mary finishing the drink and setting it down.

MATTHEW

It's not going well.

THOMAS

I couldn't agree more.

MATTHEW

You see it, too? How frustrated
Mary is? When she needs a pause to
compose herself, she takes a drink.

THOMAS

No, I meant staying behind with
you.

Thomas shifts his focus to the camp some 50 yards off.
Squints.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Looks fine to me. Reading's hard.

MATTHEW

Is it because I was a tax
collector?

THOMAS

You were a tax collector?

MATTHEW

You knew that.

Thomas returns to preparing food. He chops for a beat.

THOMAS

I think you're arrogant.

Matthew LAUGHS out loud at the absurdity. Then trails off.
Am I? No, I'm not.

MATTHEW

I don't think you're right. I'm very humble.

THOMAS

You're bragging about your humility!

Matthew considers this. Fidgets. His eyes instinctively go back to the women's camp.

Thomas stands, marches over to Matthew.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

And yes, it's because you were a tax collector. And why are you watching Ramah so closely? Hmm?

MATTHEW

I'm not watching her!

THOMAS

You're collecting Torah verses, donating your tablets--

MATTHEW

They're easy to get.

THOMAS

Do you like her?

Matthew is overloaded. He can't process the confrontation. From the outside, it looks a little like, well, guilt.

The best Matthew can get out --

MATTHEW

You can be illogical when you're emotional.

Matthew collects his things and shuffles away. Thomas watches after him a beat before turning back to food prep.

MYSTERY POV - from the upper boughs of a tree, watching Matthew walk to a clearing. Matthew sets his things down and sits.

REVERSE of Simon Z, sitting in a tree nearby. He fixes his gaze on the women's camp --

Ramah nows sits alone reading. Mary has moved a distance off, pacing.

514

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - DAY

514

Jesus and John sit by the river's edge.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

It's right there in the law of Moses: "If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless."

JESUS

I understand. It is against the law of Moses, but I'm here for bigger purposes than the breaking of rules.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

You minimize INCEST?

JESUS

Of course not.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

What of the law of Moses will be minimized?

JESUS

All of this will be addressed, I'm not ready to get into the specifics.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

You appear to be not ready to get into the specifics of a lot of things. For instance--

JESUS

Stay on topic: The romantic lives of rulers and kings has been and always will be a subject of enormous fascination for people. It was covered at length in Torah. I don't see why you feel the need to focus on it now.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

He's a client king, or tetrarch or whatever, he's one of us, he's unlawful, and I'm not afraid of him. He might not be as bad as his father but he's still bad. I'm going to march straight into his court and say it to his face. My followers will love it.

JESUS

You do know how that will end, right?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

(cavalier)

I get arrested all the time. It's what radicals do.

JESUS

Aren't you of more use to the world outside of prison than in?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Wouldn't you be of more use to the world if you stopped obscuring your identity and running away every time you perform a miracle?

JESUS

We're not talking about me, we're talking about you.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I'll be fine. Herod is AFRAID of me because the people hold me to be a prophet. Some say Elijah himself.

JESUS

Well, maybe not THE Elijah, but we both know the Elijah-ness of your role.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Do we? I'm starting to wonder why you're taking this so slow. Why are you always going away to these desolate places?

JESUS

I need alone time. I'm working on something. A sermon. A big one.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Oh, you're the planning type. I just say the first thing that comes to my mind, in preaching OR in life.

JESUS

Yes, from when you first started talking. And I heard about the brood of vipers comments. Do you know how the poets say vipers are born?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Yeah, that they hatch inside their mothers and eat their way out, killing their mothers in the process. I thought it was a pretty good line.

JESUS

No one wants to be accused of killing their Eema.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Yeah, well I'm not here to make friends with religious leaders, and based on that stunt you pulled on the Sabbath, neither are you.

Jesus smiles.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

Are you really going to be nice to these people?

JESUS

I suppose not. Just be careful. The people have heard prophecy for a long time--

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Yes, and now it's TIME. Thirty years you've been here.

JESUS

David was a shepherd and in the wilderness and on the run for 30 years before he became king.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Yeah, and then he ruled for 40 years and killed a bunch of people, made horrible mistakes and died in bed with a teenager he wasn't married to. You gonna do that, too?

JESUS

Fine, bad analogy. Also, she was just there to keep him warm. They weren't-

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I know, and I know you what meant, but I'm telling you these people get confused easily, and quickly.

JESUS

I'm going to tell stories that make sense to some people, and not to others, and that's just how it's going to be.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I get it. It's not like I'm preaching stories for children, either.

A long pause. The weight of what they're discussing sinks in.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

It's becoming real, isn't it? All we've prepared for?

JESUS

It is.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I mean, it's always been real, but it's one thing to preach about it, and to hear my Abba's prophecy growing up, and your Eema's song...but it's heavy when it becomes real, no? Do you feel ready?

Jesus smiles.

JESUS

I'm always ready to do my Father's will...that doesn't make it easy.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Listen, I spoke rudely to you because we go back so long, so I can tease a bit. But you know that my heart is yours, my life is yours, and the sole reason I was miraculously conceived by two old people was so I could prepare the way for you. I'm just impatient for you to get to work.

JESUS

I'm grateful for your part. You have done God's work, albeit in a...unique way.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Guilty as charged.

(pause)

Perhaps a poor choice of words.

515 EXT. CAMPSITE - Z'S CAMP - DAY 515 *

Atticus comes upon Simon Z's campsite from earlier.

He studies the gray embers, feels for warmth. Yes, there was a fire here as early as this morning.

Atticus clocks the neatly stacked pile of wood for the next weary traveler.

516 EXT. JERICHO CAMPSITE - GOLDEN HOUR 516 *

Ramah copies characters on a wax tablet. Mary approaches.

MARY MAGDALENE

How is it?

RAMAH

It's hard work. How old were you when you learned this?

MARY MAGDALENE

I was young. I think it's easier when you are a child. But I had a better teacher than you do.

(a beat)

I'm sorry about before.

RAMAH

Don't worry about it.

MARY MAGDALENE

I just feel...I don't know. I saw
a Roman on horseback when I was
picking lemons today.

RAMAH

Did he question you?

MARY MAGDALENE

No. He didn't see me at all.
Just...seeing him filled me with--
I just dropped the lemons and ran.
Totally ignored those prayers in my
hands.

RAMAH

This is hard. Not just the
reading.

Mary stares a moment, then recovers.

MARY MAGDALENE

Do you wanna try again?

Ramah nods. Pulls out the Torah.

517 EXT. JERICHO CAMP - MEN'S CAMP - SAME 517 *

Thomas squeezes lemon juice onto the diced cucumbers.
Matthew does as Thomas does. Thomas both amused and annoyed
by Matthew's mimicry.

518 EXT. JERICHO CAMP - WOMEN'S CAMP - SAME 518 *

As Ramah reads. Mary at her shoulder.

Suddenly, Mary is siezed with terror. Her hand trembles.
She TWITCHES as though something were moving inside her.

Ramah notices --

RAMAH

What is it? What's--

OFF -- A HOWL. Ramah turns to the sound.

519 EXT. JERICHO CAMP - MEN'S CAMP - SAME 519 *

Matthew and Thomas freeze at the sound.

MATTHEW

Did you--

Before he can finish the question, a guttural GROANING reaches their ears. It grows into a howl.

THOMAS

I heard that.

Thomas grabs the knife. Matthew grabs...a ladel. Gives Thomas a look. You got a better idea?

OFF - Wild breathing, snorting, and unintelligible guttural muttering. Thomas' eyes go wide.

MATTHEW

Mary and Ramah!

Both rush OFF.

END ACT TWO

The Chosen-MediaValet

ACT THREE

520 EXT. JERICHO CAMP - WOMEN'S CAMP - DAY

520 *

Ramah looks up from her tablet in fear. But Mary remains still. Her face an expression of dark, devastation.

For her it had not been a question of "if" this day would come, but when.

HOWLING. It's right on top of them.

THOMAS (O.S.)
(frantic whisper)
Ramah! Ramah!

She turns to see Thomas and Matthew take cover in their camp.

RAMAH
What's that sound?

Scanning the nearby trees for some hint.

THOMAS
Don't know.

Matthew goes to Mary.

MATTHEW
Are you hurt?
(no response)
Mary?

But she's gone. Just then --

Staggering Man lurches into the clearing, full possessed. He has strength and purpose.

Ramah SCREAMS. Thomas pulls her behind him.

Matthew tries to pull Mary away but she won't budge. He stands in front of her, brandishing the ladel.

STAGGERING MAN
Ugh! That smell. It's on you all,
but worse. Putrid...

MATTHEW
Don't come any closer!

Staggering Man lunges forward, gnashing his teeth. He swats the ladel out of Matthew's hand.

Just then, behind him, Simon Z drops down from the trees soundlessly. His hand on his dagger.

THOMAS' eyes go wide at the sight of a zealot behind a demoniac.

As Simon advances, coolly --

MARY MAGDALENE (O.S.)

Stop.

Everyone turns in surprise to see Mary take a step toward Staggering Man. He freezes before flashing recognition --

STAGGERING MAN

Lilith.

MARY MAGDALENE

I don't answer to that name.

STAGGERING MAN

They told me about you.

MARY MAGDALENE

Did they?

STAGGERING MAN

All seven of them.

MARY MAGDALENE

My name is Mary. It was always Mary.

STAGGERING MAN

(savoring)

Oh the STORIES they had.

LITTLE JAMES and THADDEUS arrive on the outskirts as he moves in on Mary.

STAGGERING MAN (CONT'D)

You're scared.

Mary swallows. In spite of shaking and a weak voice, she manages --

MARY MAGDALENE

What's your name?

She is standing face to face with him now.

STAGGERING MAN

Belial, spawn of Oriax, Fifth Knight of--

MARY MAGDALENE
What's your real name?

He RECOILS, covering his nose --

STAGGERING MAN
RANK! That smell...
(looks from face to face,
panicked)
It's on all of you!

MARY MAGDALENE
(barely holding it
together)
What did your mother call you?

Staggering Man appears worried, panicked. Is he losing control. Involuntarily --

STAGGERING MAN
C....C.....Can't say.

He LAUGHS maniacally. **Gotcha.** Mary slumps.

521 EXT. JERICHO CAMPSITE - EDGE - CONTINUOUS 521 *

Andrew, Philip, John the Baptist, Simon, and Jesus take in the scene as they approach.

ANDREW
Who is Mary talking to?

Jesus drops His pack, quickens His pace. He knows what awaits.

522 EXT. JERICHO CAMP - WOMEN'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS 522 *

Mary pleads --

MARY MAGDALENE
Please say your name.

Staggering Man LUNGES at Mary, hands out to grab her. As he prepares to strike ---

SIMON Z flies in, seemingly from nowhere. He slams Staggering Man down and raises his knife.

SIMON Z
Leave.

Staggering Man rages and charges, easily knocking the knife from Z's hand and overpowering him. Simon's eyes widen at the supernatural strength. As Staggering Man begins to choke him --

JESUS

Out! Out of him!

Staggering Man screams, instantly flops over like a rag doll and is still, his face in the dirt.

All is silent. Everyone in shock, Z barely breathing as he stares at Jesus. **Him again.**

Philip and Andrew exchange looks. **Whoa.**

Finally --

JOHN THE BAPTIST

YEAH!!!

The tension releases, just a bit. Mary, shaken, hustles away.

Jesus gently turns Staggering Man over on his back. He looks up at Jesus in exhausted relief and confusion, squinting in the light.

JESUS

Welcome back.

Jesus gently wipes the dirt from Staggering Man's face. Staggering Man begins to gently weep.

JESUS (CONT'D)

I know. It seemed like it would never end.

He nods through tears.

As everyone seemingly comforts everyone, nobody seems to notice Simon Z watching Jesus in awe.

Finally, John the Baptist takes in the sight of the dagger, Simon Z's manner of dress. To no one in particular --

JOHN THE BAPTIST

When did you pick up the zealot?

(approaching Simon Z)

Hi, I'm John.

Suddenly the group is aware of the stranger in their midst.
Zealot?

SIMON
Who are you?

SIMON Z
Simon.

SIMON
Yes?

JESUS
I'll stop you there. You're both
Simons.

SIMON Z
Did you heal my brother in
Jerusalem, Rabbi?

JESUS
Yes.

SIMON Z
Then you're--

JESUS
Yes.

SIMON Z
Where is your--

JESUS
(indicating his followers)
Right here.

Simon Z looks around the group -- nerds. Women. Short guys. Handicapped guys. The fact that JTB is in the mix at the moment doesn't help. Jesus chuckles.

JESUS (CONT'D)
It's not whom you pictured by my
side at the catacombs? And there
are more not here at the moment.
Let's go for a walk, Simon son of
Zebulon.
(re Staggering Man)
Tend his wounds. Thomas? Some
food for him. Ramah? Check on
Mary, please.

SHMUEL

We need to update a report submitted last week about a man who performed a miracle on Shabbat, and then told the healed person to commit a sin. And to file an addendum linking this report to my original petition.

SECRETARY

Wait, slow down. What changed about your report?

YANNI

We have a name.

SHMUEL

The offender is known.

Secretary sighs the way only a bureaucrat can -- announcing how little he cares and what an inconvenience you are.

He retrieves a box of scrolls. Begins, um, scrolling --

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

The petition was in regards to an incident in Capernaum, in which one Jesus of Nazareth performed a similar miracle and declared the authority to forgive sins, essentially claiming--

SECRETARY

Oh, yes. I know about this case. It was escalated to Sanhedrin and the beginning stages of a formal inquiry were commenced. I processed the paperwork.

YANNI

That inquiry MUST be updated with what happened at the Bethesda pool. We have significant evidence it was the same person.

Shmuel surreptitiously eyes Yanni. Significant evidence is a stretch.

SECRETARY

That inquiry was closed.

SHMUEL

What?

SECRETARY

It never advanced beyond opening arguments.

SHMUEL

Why not?

Secretary looks from Shmuel to Yanni.

SECRETARY

Those things are confidential.

SHMUEL

But this is a huge development. The inquiry must be reopened!

SECRETARY

That doesn't happen.

YANNI

Why?!

Secretary sighs. There it is again.

SECRETARY

All I can tell you is a very prominent member of the Sanhedrin declared it a one-off incident by a rogue who posed no material threat. No further questions were asked. And none will be.

Secretary puts the box away with a THUNK. Shmuel boils.

524 INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

524

Yanni and Shmuel walk quickly.

YANNI

The Teacher of Teachers.

SHMUEL

Wordsmithing. He said he would not oppose the petition itself, but never said anything about what he would do if the case actually reached the Sanhedrin.

YANNI

Nicodemus has influence, but he's not Caiaphas. Not even close.

SHMUEL

He closed the inquiry before it even got past opening remarks, and no one challenged it. You don't call that power?

YANNI

I know some people above his station who may see things more...clearly. Especially with this most recent development of violating Shabbat. Come with me.

Off Yanni's confident look --

525

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - DAY

525

Simon Z and Jesus walk along the banks for the Jordan.

SIMON Z

But why Jesse? Why my brother, out of everyone?

JESUS

The man suffered unspeakably for 38 years. It's a long time. And how else would I get your attention?

SIMON Z

My attention?

Jesus pauses.

JESUS

Your order trained you to be fearless, no?

SIMON Z

No lord but God, to the death.

JESUS

What I did with your brother isn't the last of the trouble I intend to cause.

Z is into this.

SIMON Z

You are Messiah. Aren't you?

JESUS

Yes.

Simon Z bows to Jesus.

SIMON Z

Then I will do anything you ask.

JESUS

Okay. I ask you to understand the nature of my mission, Simon.

Simon is speechless. What does that mean?

SIMON Z

Yes. How?

JESUS

Mmm. How, indeed. It's not so easy with distracted humans.

SIMON Z

I have trained for years for this, I am ready to execute your mission today.

JESUS

We'll see. Show me your weapon.

Simon Z reverentially removes his beloved sica and its sheath from his belt. And hands it to Jesus.

Jesus removes the knife and whistles at it. Simon Z smiles. Jesus pauses, then throws the knife and sheath into the river. Simon Z's eyes bug out of his head. He covers.

JESUS (CONT'D)

You didn't see that coming.

Simon Z looks up to find Jesus smiling. Simon's mind races. World upside down -- again.

SIMON Z

You have no use for that?

JESUS

I have a better sword...you'll see. We have much to discuss, just be patient. You've had quite a week.

SIMON Z

Without my sica dagger, why do you need someone like me?

Jesus laughs.

JESUS

I have everything I need. I WANTED you.

SIMON Z

But why?

JESUS

You are not alone in misunderstanding. But not to worry. I'm preparing something to share with the world.

(good-naturedly slings an arm around him)

For now, wanting you by my side has to be enough. No one buys their way into our group because of special skills.

SIMON Z

Sure.

(a beat)

Rabbi?

JESUS

Yes, Simon.

SIMON Z

After what you did at the Pool during a High Holy Feast Day, there may be some who might try to...**stop** you. Maybe even some from my former order, especially if they find out you've got a different mission. It's why I delayed finding you.

JESUS

And what? You'll stop them?

SIMON Z

Well, I would be a lot more likely to if you hadn't thrown my sica in the river.

Jesus laughs. Then turns reflective --

JESUS

When that day comes...I guess we'll find out.

Jesus and Simon Z continue on down the bank of the river.

A beat. OFF - SLOSHING.

525A EXT. JORDAN RIVER - CONTINUOUS

525A *

CLOSE ON sandled feet walking through the shallow river,
pausing at rock outcropping in the stream.

A HAND reaches into the water to retrieve the sica dagger.
The hand of ATTICUS.

He inspects the dagger and then, with an almost incredulous
look, turns in the direction Jesus and Simon departed.

END ACT THREE

The Chosen-Media Valet

ACT FOUR

526 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - ROAD TO JERICHO - DUSK 526

Mary is walking at dusk toward the city of Jericho in the distance.

Tears streak her dusty face. She's doing something she knows is bad for her. She couldn't tell you what or why. She wouldn't even try to justify it. But she's compelled.

Every few steps a sob bubbles up before she can suppress it.

Suddenly, a ROMAN SOLDIER on horseback appears in the distance, behind her.

She looks back, sees him. Her whole body tightens. But she doesn't run. She stands right in the middle of the road as he approaches.

Roman Soldier GLARES as he clip-clops past her but says nothing. Mary watches him pass, defiantly.

527 EXT. JERICHO STREET - MOMENTS LATER 527

Mary walks the street at dusk. A SHOPKEEPER lowers his doors, closing for the night.

Mary comes upon the alley she was looking for and turns down it.

528 EXT. JERICHO - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS 528

Mary ducks through a curtain and heads down a stone staircase.

An imposing wooden door sits closed behind an imposing BOUNCER who rises as Mary approaches.

BOUNCER

We don't serve women.

Mary smiles knowingly.

MARY MAGDALENE

Tell "THRO" there's somebody here to see him.

The bouncer narrows his eyes. A beat and he waves her off.

BOUNCER
Did someone put you up to this?

MARY MAGDALENE
Just get Thro.

BOUNCER
(chuckling)
C'mon. You look like a nice girl.
It's late. Go home.

She pulls off her head covering. She's not going anywhere.

Bouncer puts up his hands in surrender.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)
Okay. Who should I say wants to
see him?

Mary hesitates. Her first real moment of uncertainty, fear.
She shakes it off.

MARY MAGDALENE
Tell him...a friend from The Hammer
wants to win back her money.

Bouncer snorts laughter.

BOUNCER
Well, you obviously know what
button to push with Thro. Wait
here.

As Bouncer turns --

529 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CAMP - DUSK

529

Jesus and Simon Z encounter John the Baptist as he prepares
to embark on the road.

JESUS
You're really going for it.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
You know I can't be silent.

JESUS
I know. Soon I'll break my own
silence as well.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
Soon is such a strange word. It
could mean anything.

JESUS
 (smiling, going in for a
 hug)
 I love you.

They embrace.

John the Baptist lets out the kind of enraptured exhalation which means the heart knows this is their last meeting, but the mind does not.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 And thank you for letting me see
 that. I heard about the miracles. I
 never thought I'd get to SEE one.

JESUS
 Timing is everything, I guess.

As JtB backs away, one last time:

JESUS (CONT'D)
 And John - what you're about to do -

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 (gleeful)
 People have been warning me my
 entire life! Warnings are how I
 know I'm on the right track!

JESUS
 (walking backwards,
 bidding him to go)
 I'm not warning you. You're doing
 what you're supposed to do. I'm
 only reminding you to be sure to
 listen to God's voice as you do it.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
 Always!

JtB laughs and takes off running down the road back to Jerusalem.

ATTICUS POV - of John the Baptist and Jesus parting.

REVERSE of Atticus shows us THIS connection is intriguing.

ATTICUS
 (sotto)
 The baptiser?

We don't yet understand the full extent of Atticus energized.

Atticus sheathes Simon Z's dagger and takes off in the direction of John.

530 INT. YANNI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

530

Yanni drafts a letter at a small, high-top table.

Shmuel paces nearby.

SHMUEL

An appeal is pointless. Nicodemus is too powerful.

YANNI

It's not an appeal.

SHMUEL

What Sanhedrin member would take up our fight against a fellow member?

YANNI

Your thinking is too small.

SHMUEL

What then? Go to Caiphas directly?

YANNI

(taking a different tack)
Shmuel, there are two schools of Mishnaic thought--

SHMUEL

Hillel and Shammai. Of course. But what does that--

YANNI

And when there is an issue presented to the Sanhedrin that could be interpreted two ways, the court splits.

Yanni leaves space for Shmuel to put it together. He can't.

YANNI (CONT'D)

You're still a rube. When the court splits along Mishnaic traditions, it becomes political. Former allies become enemies.

SHMUEL

We can turn people against Nicodemus.

YANNI

Maybe. But the right issues -- especially those that appeal to emotion -- can be political gold.

SHMUEL

False prophecy is a moral imperative!

YANNI

To you. And if we can make it emotional as well, you may find that we don't have to seek those who would oppose Nicodemus.

(closer, conspiratorially)
Nicodemus himself may have a change of heart.

The idea and it's potential dawning on Shmuel. He's getting excited.

SHMUEL

What do we have to do?

YANNI

Most Sanhedrin members follow the teachings of who?

SHMUEL

Shammai.

YANNI

Exactly.

SHMUEL

Ah, and he's the most rigid interpreter of doctrine the Sanherin has known, this is exactly the sort of issue --

YANNI

Now you're learning.

SHMUEL

You can get this to him?

YANNI

That's not the hard part, the hard part is getting him to make it a priority.

SHMUEL

But if he understands the crime --

YANNI

It's got no political weight.
 (off Shmuel's blank look)
 Here's what's important to Shammai
 right now: He's in a dogfight with
 Sanhedrin President Shimon -- the
 son of Hillel, who is...

SHMUEL

The more tolerant teacher...
 Shammai's opposite school of
 thought.

YANNI

Shammai has the votes in the
 Sanhedrin, yes. But Shimon has the
 common people because he's Hillel's
 son.

SHMUEL

Shammai wants the people?

YANNI

And Shimon wants votes.

Yanni chuckles. He finds a clean parchment. Holds to the
 light to check for imperfections before setting on the table.

YANNI (CONT'D)

If we could offer President Shimon
 a way to beat Shammai at his own
 rigid game...

SHMUEL

We pit the school of Hillel against
 the school of Shammai.
 (overwhelmed sigh)
 Politics. So you're writing a
 letter to Shimon?

YANNI

Shimon is too busy to read our
 letter. His personal scribe,
 however, is an old friend. He will
 have the time and have Shimon's ear
 when the opportunity comes.

Shmuel continues pacing.

SHMUEL

Jesse gave us so little information.

YANNI

It's not entirely his fault. The man vanished after the miracle.

SHMUEL

That's his pattern. Nicodemus himself was struck by the same curiosity -- he performs miracles discretely. And vanishes.

YANNI

What else do you remember from Capernaum?

SHMUEL

A woman on the roof -- an Ethiopian -- who referred to an incident with a leper outside the city. I could go back to Capernaum and look for her.

YANNI

Excellent. If the case is reopened it will have the full weight of the Sanhedrin behind it. There can't be too many Ethiopian woman in Galilean backwater towns.

SHMUEL

That's my home.

Shmuel is wounded for a beat. Then, lightbulb --

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

Cousin! He said he was going to meet his cousin.

YANNI

Jesse wasn't clear on that detail.

SHMUEL

But it's something! We can search the census records for relations. The population of Nazareth is so small, he will be easy to find. We can identify his father, mother, and their relatives. This is a census year.

YANNI

The numbers aren't in yet. How old did he seem?

SHMUEL

30s, early 40s. He would have been old enough to have been counted in that last census.

YANNI

Check on it yourself. Don't draw attention. In the meantime, we need to recreate the events.

As Shmuel pulls up a seat --

YANNI (CONT'D)

Ugh. Shammai, Shimon, Shmuel...our people really need a better variety of names.

531 INT. NOMAD TAVERN - NIGHT

531

Bouncer leads Mary through the grimey bar. Seedy would be an upgrade.

BOUNCER

Sorry for the delay.

MARY MAGDALENE

It's like you said. I look like a nice girl. How could you have known?

She shouts past him.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Jethro!

The owner of The Nomad, JETHRO, dries his hands on an apron, and is suddenly elated --

JETHRO

Lilly! You're back! I heard you were dead or something.

MARY MAGDALENE

Well, sort of.

JETHRO

You look AMAZING! Somebody kill me.

MARY MAGDALENE

Look, I'm here for one thing. And
I have money this time, I can pay
for it myself.

The Chosen-Media Valet

JETHRO
 Sure, sure! Come on back!

She follows him past the Bouncer.

JETHRO (CONT'D)
 I've refined the recipe since last
 you were here, it's even
 stronger...

As he proceeds toward the back --

532 EXT. JERICHO CAMPSITE - NIGHT

532 *

Simon introduces Simon Z to the disciples.

SIMON
 This is Thomas - he overthinks
 things all the time, but he's
 growing on me.

SIMON Z
 I'm Simon.

Simon gives a shrug. It's true. Doesn't mean he has to like
 the sound of it.

SIMON
 This is Nathanael. He always says
 the first thing that comes to his
 mind, so don't be offended.

SIMON Z
 I'm Simon.

Nails on a chalk board to Simon.

SIMON
 This is Ramah, she's an expert
 vintner, so any questions you have
 about wine, just see her.

SIMON Z
 I'm--

Simon puts his hand on Simon Z's shoulder.

SIMON
 She knows.

Simon smiles. An understanding.

SIMON (CONT'D)

And the only other woman we--

He stops short. Looks around.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Where's Mary?

Suddenly, Ramah looks worried as well. They quickly check the women's tent. Nothing.

Matthew emerges from a tent.

MATTHEW POV - while the group goes about their evening reverie, Simon and Ramah conspire to split up and look for Mary.

533

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - NIGHT

533

Jesus sits near the river's edge. He stares at the moonlight on the water, pondering.

JESUS

Salt preserves from corruption, if it loses its saltiness, it won't do what it--

(stops himself)

No, no, if salt has lost its taste... it's salty flavor... it's saltiness... You are the salt of the earth. If salt has lost--

Simon rushes onto the scene.

SIMON

Rabbi, I'm sorry. I'm sorry to interrupt.

JESUS

It's alright Simon.

SIMON

Mary's gone missing. Ramah checked the forest, but she thinks Mary was affected by the demoniac. She said Mary wasn't feeling right all day.

JESUS

(troubled, sad)

Hmm.

SIMON
You don't think she could have gone
into Jericho.

Jesus doesn't respond. His eyes beam with compassion,
heartache.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Maybe I should go into the city.
Just to be sure.

JESUS
Yes.

MATTHEW (O.S.)
I'm coming, too.

Matthew emerges from the shadows.

SIMON
Are you spying again?

JESUS
Simon, take Matthew.

Simon hates this. Hates it. And he's about to make a case --

SIMON
Rabbi, I think--

JESUS
Simon?

Something about Jesus' countenance freezes him. He listens
intently.

JESUS (CONT'D)
This is about finding Mary.

SIMON
I understand.

And he does. Sort of. On a lighter note --

JESUS
We also picked up a zealot today.
The only people they assassinate
more than Romans are Jewish co-
conspirators.

SIMON
Tax collectors.

Jesus nods.

JESUS
Simon, son of Zebulon is very new
to our way of life.

SIMON
(relents)
I'll take him.

Calling --

JESUS
Matthew?

Matthew rejoins them.

MATTHEW
Yes, Rabbi.

JESUS
That passage Philip was teaching
you.

MATTHEW
Yes?

JESUS
What is it?

MATTHEW
"If I ascend into heaven, You are
there. If I make my bed in the
depths, You are there."

JESUS
(sad)
Keep it in your thoughts.

Matthew's face turns even more worried.

Simon and Matthew size each other up. Simon resolves to put
his animus aside. Matthew steels himself for the abuse.

SIMON
Come on, Matthew. Let's find Mary.

Matthew nods and the two men head off into the dark. Jesus
remains at the rivers edge as we --

FADE TO BLACK.

END EPISODE.