

THE CRUCIFIXION

Block 1

[Open with cross lying against mound, centre-stage (C), mortice on mound (U), all actors off-stage. S1 enters stage right (R) from behind tree and beckons other soldiers after her with opening lines. S2-4 enter R and all four take positions around cross – up-right (UR), up-left (UL), down-right (DR), and down-left (DL). Soldiers adjust the cross to face towards the audience.]

First Soldier

Sir knights, take heed hither in hie:
 This deed undree we may not draw;
 Ye wot yourselves as well as I
 How lords and leaders of our law
 (5) Have given doom that this dote shall die.

Second Soldier

Sir, all their counsel well we know.
 Since we are come to Calvary,
 Let ilk man help now as him owe.

Third Soldier

We are all ready, lo,
 (10) That forward to fulfil.

Fourth Soldier

Let hear how we shall do,
 And go we tite theretill.

First Soldier

It may not help here for to hone,
 If we shall any worship win.

Second Soldier

(15) He must be dead needlings by noon.

Third Soldier

Then it is good time that we begin.

Fourth Soldier

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

First Soldier

He shall be set and learned soon,
 (20) With care to him and all his kin.

Second Soldier

The foulest death of all
 Shall he die for his deeds.

Third Soldier

That means cross him we shall.

Fourth Soldier

Behold, so right he redes.

S1: Jess S2: Molly
 S3: Kyra S4: Alys

First Soldier

(25) Then to this work us must take heed,
So that our working be not wrong.

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier

And I have gone for gear, good speed,
(30) Both hammers and nails large and long.

Fourth Soldier

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

First Soldier

Fair might ye fall in fere,
That have wrought us on this wise.

Second Soldier

(35) Us needs not for to lere
Such faitours to chastise.

Block 2

Third Soldier

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

[Soldiers begin to move uphill, over to U while speaking to summon Jesus.]

Fourth Soldier

The cross on ground is goodly graid,
(40) And bored even as it ought to be.

First Soldier

Look that the lad on length be laid,
And made be ta'en unto this tree

Second Soldier

For all his fare he shall be flayed
That on essay soon shall ye see

Third Soldier

(45) Come forth, thou cursed knave,
Thy comfort soon shall keel.

Fourth Soldier

Thine hire here shalt thou have.

First Soldier

Walk on! Now work we well.

[All soldiers should now be U; Jesus appears unexpectedly from the crypt and walks through the audience while speaking lines. Upon reaching D, Jesus turns around to audience to deliver final lines.]

Jesus

Almighty God, my Father, hear my plea
 Let these matters be brought to mind:
 Thou bade I should obedient be,
 For Adam's wrongs to be resigned.
 Here to death I do agree
 From that sin to save mankind,
 And I beseech thee especially
 That through my death they may favour find, *[reaches D, addressing audience]*
 And from the devil them defend
 So that their souls be safe
 In wellness without end.

(60) I have nothing else to crave.

Block 3

[While soldiers talk, Jesus takes off coat and places it on the ground. Soldiers begin to move to positions – S1 at head (U), S2 at right hand (R), S3 at left hand (L), and S4 at feet (D).]

First Soldier

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

Second Soldier

The warlock waxes worse than wood;
 This doleful death ne dreadeth he nought.

Third Soldier

(65) Thou shouldst have mind, with main and mood,
 Of wicked works that thou hast wrought.

Fourth Soldier

I hope that he had been as good
 Have ceased of saws that he up sought.

First Soldier

Those saws shall rue him sore,
 (70) For all his sauntering, soon.

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier

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

[Jesus lies down.]

Fourth Soldier

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

First Soldier

S1: Jess S2: Molly
 S3: Kyra S4: Alys

This traitor here tainted of treason,
 Go fast and fetter him then, ye three;
 And since he claimeth kingdom with crown,
 (80) Even as king here hang shall he.

Second Soldier

Now, certes, I shall not fine
 Ere his right hand be fast.

Third Soldier

The left hand then is mine;
 Let see who bears him best.

Fourth Soldier

(85) His limbs on length then shall I lead,
 And even unto the bore them bring.

First Soldier

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

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier

This forward may not fail;
 Now we are right arrayed.

Fourth Soldier

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

Block 4

First Soldier

Sir knights, say now, work we ought?

Second Soldier

Yes, certes, I think I have this hand.

Third Soldier

And to the bore I have it brought
 (100) Full graciously withouten band.

First Soldier

Strike on then hard, for him thee bought.

[While saying the following lines, S2 presents nail to audience, while S2 and 3 then hammer nails to hands in with exaggerated movements – 3 hits each. SFX: cymbal timed to hammering motions.]

Second Soldier

Yes, here is a stub will stiffly stand;
 Through bones and sinews it shall be sought.
 This work is well, I will warrant.

First Soldier

(105) Say, sir, how do we there?
This bargain may not blin.

Third Soldier

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

Fourth Soldier

I hope that mark amiss be bored.

Second Soldier

(110) Then must he bide in bitter bale.

Third Soldier

In faith, it was over-scantily scored;
That makes it foully for to fail.

First Soldier

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

Third Soldier

(115) Yea, thou commandest lightly as a lord;
Come help to hale him, with ill hail!

First Soldier

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

Third Soldier

And I shall tache him to,
(120) Full nimbly with a nail.
This work will hold, that dare I heet,
For now are fest fast both his hend.

Block 5

Fourth Soldier

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

[All soldiers get up, move to D.]

Second Soldier

(125) Let see what bourd his bale might beet;
Thereto my back now would I bend.

Fourth Soldier [displaying untied rope]

Oh! This work is all unmeet:
This boring must all be amend.

First Soldier

Ah, peace, man, for Mahoun!
(130) Let no man wot that wonder;
A rope shall rug him down,

If all his sinews go asunder.

Second Soldier [pulling rope taut with other soldiers]
That cord full kindly can I knit,
The comfort of this carl to keel.

First Soldier
(135) Fest on then fast that all be fit;
It is no force how fell he feel.

[During following lines, soldiers attempt to tie Jesus down and fail.]

Second Soldier
Lug on, ye both, a little yet.

Third Soldier
I shall not cease, as I have sele.

Fourth Soldier
And I shall fond him for to hit.

Second Soldier
(145) Oh, hale!

Fourth Soldier
Ho now! I hold it well.

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

[S2&3 hammer in nail at feet briefly. SFX for nails.]

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

First Soldier
(145) These cords have evil increased his pains,
Ere he were till the borings brought.

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

Third Soldier
Now all his gauds nothing him gains;
(150) His sauntering shall with bale be bought.

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

[S4 attempts to leave scene R, is held back/grabbed by S1.]

First Soldier
Nay, sirs, another thing

- Falls first to you and me:
 (155) They bade we should him hang
 On high that men might see.

Block 6

[Soldiers clip hammers onto their belts, returning D]

Second Soldier

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

First Soldier

- It may not mend for to moot more;
 (165) This harlot must be hanged here.

Second Soldier

The mortice is made fit therefor.

Third Soldier

Fest on your fingers then, in fere.

Fourth Soldier

I think it will never come there;
 We four raise it not right to-year.

First Soldier

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

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier

- Now certes, I hope it shall not need
 (170) To call to us more company.

[Soldiers investigate audience.]

[After looking, with disapproval.]

Methink we four should do this deed,
 And bear him to yon hill on high.

First Soldier

- It must be done, without dread.
 No more, but look ye be ready,
 (175) And this part shall I lift and lead;
 On length he shall no longer lie.
 Therefore now make ye boun:
 Let bear him to yon hill.

[Soldiers assume following positions: S1 U, S2 R, S3 L, S4 D.]

Fourth Soldier

- Then will I bear here down,
 (180) And tent his toes until.

Second Soldier [to S1]

We two shall see till either side,

For else this work will wry all wrong.

Block 7

Third Soldier

We are ready, good sirs. Abide,
And let me first his feet up fong.

Second Soldier

(185) Why tent ye so to tales this tide?

First Soldier

Lift up!

[They lift the cross.]

Fourth Soldier

Let see!

Second Soldier

Oh, lift along!

[They set the cross down again, exhausted.]

Third Soldier

From all this harm he should him hide,
And he were God.

Fourth Soldier

The devil him hang!

First Soldier

For-great harm have I hent:

(190) My shoulder is asunder.

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier

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

Fourth Soldier

(195) Lay down again and leave your din;
This deed for us will never be done.

Block 8

[Soldiers maintain positions: S1 U, S2 R, S3 L, S4 D.]

First Soldier

Essay, sirs, let see if any gin
May help him up withouten hone;
For here should bold men worship win,
(200) And not with gauds all day to gone.

Second Soldier

More bolder men than we
Full few I hope ye find.

Third Soldier

This bargain will not be,

For certes me wants wind.

Fourth Soldier

(205) So will of work never we were;
I hope this carl some cautels cast.

Second Soldier

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

First Soldier

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

Third Soldier

Oh, lift!

[They lift the cross again.]

First Soldier

We lo!

Fourth Soldier

A little more.

Second Soldier

Hold then!

First Soldier

How now!

Second Soldier

The worst is past.

Third Soldier

He weighs a wicked weight.
Heave up!

Fourth Soldier

Let down, so all his bones
Are asunder now on sides sere.

[They finish lifting the cross into position.]

Block 9

First Soldier

(225) This falling was more fell
Than all the harms he had;
Now may a man well tell
The least lith of this lad.

Third Soldier

Methinketh this cross will not abide,
(230) Ne stand still in this mortice yet.

[S1 and S2 wobble cross in mortice]

Fourth Soldier

At the first time was it made over-wide:
That makes it wave, thou mayst well wit.

First Soldier

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

Second Soldier [pointing at wedges on floor]

There are wedges arrayed
 For that, both great and small.

Third Soldier [looking around in mock confusion]

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

Fourth Soldier [gesturing at belts]

We have them here even at our hand.

Second Soldier [taking wedges from S1]

Give me this wedge; I shall it in drive. *[places both wedges in]*

[S2 & S1 begin hammering in wedges x3. SFX: cymbal x3.]

Fourth Soldier [picking up spare wedge]

Here is another yet ordand.

Third Soldier

Do take it me hither belive.

First Soldier

(245) Lay on then fast.

Third Soldier

Yes, I warrant
 I thring them sam, so mote I thrive.
 Now will this cross full stably stand;
 All if he rave, they will not rive.

First Soldier [to Jesus]

Say, sir, how likes you now
 (250) This work that we have wrought?

Fourth Soldier

We pray you say us how
 Ye feel, or faint ye aught.

Block 10

[Soldiers move to positions: S1 U, S2 L, S3 D, S4 R. Soldiers start to pace slowly anti-clockwise around Jesus.]

Jesus

All you here around this mound,
 Make sure my suffering is in sight,
 Behold my hands, my feet, all bound,
 And fully feel, before your flight,
 If any mourning may be found
 Or misery matching such a plight.
 My Father, who may cure each wound,
 Forgive these men who do me spite.
 They know not what they do.

Therefore, my Father, I crave
 Never let their sins be due,
 But see their souls to save.

[Soldiers continue pacing around, delivering lines when they reach U, facing Jesus and the audience.]

First Soldier

(265) We! Hark! He jangles like a jay.

Second Soldier

Methink he patters like a pie.

Third Soldier

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

Fourth Soldier

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

[Soldiers stop pacing]

First Soldier

Therefore he feels full fell affray,
 And deemed this day for to die.

Second Soldier

Vah! Qua destruis templum...

Third Soldier

His saws were so, certain.

Fourth Soldier

(275) And, sirs, he said to some
 He might raise it again.

Block 11

First Soldier

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

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier

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

Fourth Soldier [starting to leave R]

Then may we wend at will.

First Soldier [holding back S4]

Nay, good sirs, not so soon.

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

Second Soldier

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

Third Soldier [picking up coat from floor]

I rede we draw cut for this coat-
 Lo, see how soon – all sides to save.

Fourth Soldier

(295) The short cut shall win, that well ye wot,
 Whether it fall to knight or knave.

[The soldiers gather D to play 4-way rock-paper-scissors – S2-4 play scissors, S1 plays rock.]

First Soldier [taking coat from S3]

Fellows, ye thar not flite,
 For this mantle is mine.

Second Soldier

Go we then hence tite;
 (300) This travail here we tine.

[Soldiers leave R, returning behind tree.]

FIN