

## **Extra, Extra! The Exclusive True Story of Easter**

*The top step is set with newspapers, scissors, tape, pens, etc. spread across a table like an old school newsroom.*

*Reporters and layout/copy staff are dressed as near to reporters as possible - if we can find several fedoras to stick PRESS cards in for the evangelists, so much the better.*

Props:

- Four binders containing the reporters' scripts
- Newspapers
- Pens and/or markers
- Scissors
- Tape
- Post-its (three of which have the words "CHRIST" "IS" and "RISEN" written on them as big as possible; these are near where Mark will be at the end)
- Other office supplies
- Boxes of file folders and papers
- Four posters, each reading "Scene [number]" on one side and "End of scene [number]" on the other, to be carried across the front of the stage by one of the layout/copy staff at scene changes.

## Scene One

*Reporters are lounging around the newsroom. MARK is dozing - ideally with a hat over their face. MATTHEW is stacking office supplies or something similar. LUKE and JOHN are playing around. It is clearly a slow news day.*

EDITOR

*(calling from the "wing"; as each reporter's name is called, they turn/stretch/snap to attention/etc. so the audience can learn who is who)*

Matthew! Mark! Luke! John!

EDITOR *enters.*

*(brightly)*

Time to get to work, team!

MARK

*(groaning)*

I thought nothing was happening today.

LUKE

Yeah, Matthew's been asking for work every 27 minutes. I'm so bored I've been timing him.

MATTHEW

*(excited)*

What's the breaking news? Murder? Corruption in the governor's palace? Jaywalking? Did we get an exclusive?

EDITOR

Not exactly, Matthew. It's actually kind of the opposite. Today is a slow enough news day that I thought it was time we tackled some public service reporting. Sorting out the hard facts from the fake news, that sort of thing.

JOHN

Is that really necessary?

EDITOR

Necessary? Of course it is, John! Clear and truthful reporting is key to making sure the public has the real story about what's important.

LUKE

Sure, sure. What's the story?

EDITOR Jesus' resurrection.

*Pause.*

JOHN

Wasn't that, like... \*years\* ago?

MATTHEW

32 years ago, to be specific.

MARK

No way. It's been barely half that long.

LUKE

Seems longer to me.

EDITOR

See? This is exactly the problem. There are way too many rumors and myths out there about what happened when Jesus rose from the dead. I want my four ace reporters to put your heads together and give the public the one true story. No frills, just facts.

LUKE

Right! The whole truth.

MARK

Nothing *\*but\** the truth.

JOHN

I thought Jesus *\*was\** the truth.

MATTHEW

Oh, God help us.

EDITOR

Just make sure we end up with one clear authorized version of this story, okay?

*EDITOR returns to her "office" (read: organ bench or pulpit)*

## **Scene Two**

*The newsroom assistants bring in boxes of folders/papers representing interviews with eyewitnesses and professional storytellers.*

MATTHEW

Ok guys, let's get organized. We know the story starts on the first day of the week, at daybreak.

*LUKE and JOHN overlapping, each holding handfuls of papers, the first pages of which are their scripts:*

LUKE

Okay, so we've got Mary and Mary and Joanna and Mary and then Peter...

JOHN

Mary's the big story here, the Magdalene, and she gets Peter and the one Jesus loved...

LUKE

and then the walking and the walking and the breaking and the walking...

JOHN

...and brings them back to the empty tomb but they left and...

*While this is happening, MARK and MATTHEW  
pick through handfuls of pages.*

MATTHEW

*(interrupts)*

What about the earthquake?

EVERYONE ON STAGE *stops and looks at him.*

MATTHEW

What?

LUKE

What earthquake?

MARK

There was no earthquake.

MATTHEW

But I have a note...

JOHN

Pretty sure we'd have heard about it by now if there were an earthquake.

MATTHEW

Why would someone make up an earthquake?

LUKE

*(dramatically)*

For drama!

MARK

Well, you'd know drama.

LUKE

What's that supposed to mean?

MARK

You loooove to draw a story out.

LUKE

Just because I bother to tell the whole story...

JOHN

Okay, okay, the point is, no earthquake, right?

MARK

No earthquake. We don't need it.

MATTHEW

But...

LUKE, JOHN, MARK

NO EARTHQUAKE!!!

MATTHEW

*(sighing)*

Fine...

EDITOR *pops back in*

How's the story coming, fellas? Almost got it?

LUKE, JOHN, MATTHEW

*(ad lib, trying to cover, saying things like)*

Ummm.. errr... we're having a little trouble... good progress...

MARK

We're nowhere.

EDITOR

Nowhere?

MARK

Well, we agree it was Sunday.

JOHN

And it was dark.

LUKE

Dark-ish, anyway.

JOHN

Really dark!

MATTHEW

Eh, more like daybreak.

EDITOR

Well, get a move on. I want this for tomorrow's front page!

EVERYONE ELSE *groans*.

### **Scene Three**

MATTHEW *is writing in his book*.

I think we need a clearer organizational structure here.

JOHN

A who what now?

## MATTHEW

Like a chart, maybe, of all the fulfillments of the Law and the Prophets.

## MARK

We really don't.

## LUKE

It's all about the \*story,\* Matthew. (*With great, breathless drama and grand sweeping gestures.*) Jesus' body, missing from the tomb! The mess of Marys, approaching just at dawn, only to be BLINDED! by the dazzling angels, and then the angels tell the whole story again - everything Jesus told them, about how he would be raised - and the women tell the eleven THEIR story and of COURSE the men don't believe them, until Peter RUNS to the tomb and sees it for himself, and he tells the rest that the body really is gone but he didn't see any visions or anything so who knows what those women are on about, except oh then there's the two that aren't there because they're walking all the way to Emmaus, so they don't know anything, but WAIT! A mysterious stranger joins them and they tell \*him\* the story of Jesus' death but then he tells \*them\* the story of Jesus' predictions and the scriptures and the bread and the seeing and the peace and the hands and the feet and the fish and the writings and the sending because they are going to WITNESS to the STORY!!!

*(LUKE ends with a big dramatic finale, holds for applause, gets none, and finally looks around and realizes the whole room is just staring at him, except for MARK, who clearly stopped listening and started doing his own thing around the word "BLINDED". It is ideal if the actor playing LUKE can memorize this one passage so that they are free to get into the spirit and make big gestures without being tied to the script.)*

*Pause.*

## JOHN

What about the appearing in the upper room and saying "Peace be with you"?



LUKE

We already had that scene. That was the hands and the feet.

JOHN

We had one appearing in the upper room, yes. But what about second appearing, to Thomas?

MATTHEW

Don't think he knows about Thomas, John.

JOHN

What about the boat? Breakfast on the beach? Peter and the lambs? The disciple Jesus loved? (*Points at himself repeatedly for "the disciple Jesus loved"*)

MATTHEW

I wouldn't count on it.

JOHN

Well, at least he remembered some of the snacks.

MARK

*(looks up from his work)*

We're including the snakes?

*Everyone gives Mark serious side eye.*

MARK

The snakes!

MATTHEW

In... the Easter story? I think you have the wrong garden story.

MARK

No, at the end, when Jesus appears to the eleven!

JOHN

And there were... snakes?

MARK Not *there*! I mean when Jesus told them to go out and tell the good news to all creation, and the ones who believe will drink poison and pick up snakes with their bare hands and they won't get hurt!

*More staring.*

JOHN

I vote we stick with picking up snacks.

*The rest of the room nods vigorously.*

EDITOR *returns.*

MATTHEW

Oh, good, you're back. These guys are getting weird.

#### **Scene Four**

MATTHEW, MARK, and LUKE *have their heads together, scribbling and muttering unintelligibly.*

JOHN

Guys.

*(Clears throat)*

GUYS.

*(Waits)*

Guys, come on. Don't be petty. This is a key part of the story you're leaving out.

MATTHEW

Literally nobody else has this guy in the story.

JOHN

*(With facial expressions, etc. that clearly show that JOHN believes he is "the disciple Jesus loved")*

But it SAYS that *\*this guy\** is THE disciple Jesus loved. Shouldn't *\*that\** witness be a VERY IMPORTANT part of the story?

LUKE

You know you aren't fooling anyone, right? *\*You\** stuck this character in as a thinly disguised version of *\*you\** just to make *\*you\** look important.

JOHN

*(pretending to be incredibly offended)*

I WHAT? I would NEVER! This is *\*clearly\** the *\*primary\** witness we need to hear from!

LUKE

So much for all those Marys that you should have believed in the first place, I guess.

MARK

Would you stop with that already? They ran away terrified and said nothing to anyone.

MATTHEW

Your version doesn't even make any sense! You have three endings and they all contradict each other and nobody tells anyone anything useful and still you have them ending being sent out to tell everyone about... the thing they never told people about? That everyone knows about?

MARK

Oh, unlike your thing with earthquakes that only you know about?

MATTHEW

It's no weirder than your thing with snakes!

LUKE

Snakes are very upsetting.

JOHN

Not forgetting the DISCIPLE JESUS LOVED, who really needs to get put back in here...

*By now the four have reached their breaking point with each other, their volume has increased steadily, and the audience can see how mad they are at each other as the EDITOR comes back in to say*

EDITOR

WHAT is going on here???

MATTHEW, LUKE, and JOHN *cross their arms and sulk.*

EDITOR

We go to print in ten minutes! Can't you agree on anything?

*While MATTHEW, LUKE, and JOHN keep sulking, MARK picks up three post-its on which he has already written one word each, and puts one on on each colleague's foreheads.*

EDITOR

*(reading the notes)*

Christ... is... risen.

MARK

That's it. That's the story. Christ is risen.

EDITOR

*(thoughtfully)*

Christ is risen...

JOHN

It's true.

LUKE

It's powerful.

MATTHEW

It's enough.

EDITOR

*(with satisfaction)*

Christ is risen.

MARK

*(with conviction)*

Christ is risen!

EVERYONE

*(finally in agreement)*

The Lord is risen indeed!

EVERYONE

*(enthusiastically)*

ALLELUIA!