

Jesus' Phony Trial before the Chief Priests
About 5 minutes, from John 18:14 – 19:16

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Peter

Girl

Voice (of Jesus)

Accuser

Pilate

Prompter Shout a brief line, and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Peter It's so chilly tonight!

Girl Hey, you there, warming your hands by the fire.
You are one of that rebel's disciples!
Why are you here, hanging out in the High Priest's court?

Peter I am not one of that man's disciples!

Prompter & Echoes Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Girl I just heard a rooster crow!

Peter They are holding the phony trial at night; it is all illegal.
The High Priest is questioning Jesus about his teaching.
Hear him reply.

Voice I have spoken openly in synagogues and in the temple;
I have said nothing in secret. So why do you question me?
Question those who have heard what I spoke.

Peter An officer strikes Jesus' face and asks,
"Is that how you answer the high priest?"

Accuser Hey you! (*Point at Peter.*) You are a follower of that imposter!
You cut my cousin's ear off, when we arrested the Nazarene
in Gethsemane.

Peter I do not know that man, I tell you!

& Echoes Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Peter Jesus had told me that I'd deny him, and then the rooster would crow.
I rush out, weeping bitterly.

Accuser The trial is over; we find the Nazarene guilty of blasphemy.
Now the Roman governor Pilate will also try him.

Pilate What accusation do you Jews bring against this man?

Accuser If he were not an evildoer, we would not have brought him to you,
Governor Pilate. He claims to be King of the Jews!

Pilate Then take him and judge him according to your own law.

Accuser We have judged him, sir.
But your Roman law does not permit us Jews to put a felon to death.

Pilate (Face Voice.) You, whom some call King of the Jews, are you a king?

Voice My kingdom is not of this world,
or my servants would fight to protect me.
You say correctly that I am a king.
For this I was born, to testify to the truth.

Pilate What is truth?

Prompter & Echoes The moment of decision has come.

Pilate I find no guilt in this man.
You Jews have a custom that I release someone at your Passover feast.
Do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews,
or should I release the insurrectionist Barabbas?

Prompter & Echoes Barabbas!

Peter The soldiers whip Jesus cruelly. Blood stains the stone floor.
They make a crown of thorns and press it onto His head;
they put a purple robe on him and whip his face with a rod.
Hear them mock him.

Prompter & Echoes Hail, King of the Jews!

Pilate All of you, listen. I find no guilt in this man.
Look how they have beaten him!

Accuser Crucify him!

Pilate Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.

Accuser By our Law he must die, because he claims to be the Son of God.

Pilate Son of God? Oh, what have I gotten myself into?
Jesus, where are you from? Tell me!
Why do you not answer me?
I have authority to free you, or to crucify you.

Voice You would have no authority over me,
unless it had been given you from above;
for this reason he who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

Accuser (Shout and shake a fist in the air.)
If you free him, you are no friend of Caesar!
Anyone pretending to be king defies the Emperor!

Peter Pilate appears shaken.
Would the ironfisted Roman ruler let the people's majority vote decide?

Prompter & Echoes Unheard of!

Peter Look! Pilate has brought out a basin of water in front of the Jews.

Pilate I wash my hands of this affair. Do as you wish to this man.

Accuser Yes! Yes! Let his blood be on us and on our children!

Prompter & Echoes How fateful those terrible words!