

I have just about finished what I'm doing here. A few more twists should do it. I know that nobody will believe me if I just tell you outright about what I did today, especially my husband. Oh, he thinks I have come home over the years with far too many tall tales for him ever to believe a thing I say anymore. Most of the time he's ...OUCH, that's sharp ...most of the time he's right. But, today ...today something very peculiar happened while I was in Jerusalem. I know you won't believe me. That's why I'm working on this. Ah, that should about do it.

I felt like I needed to make another one of these crowns to show to you folks and to my husband. Otherwise, who'd believe that this could be worn by someone? That's right. A crown of thorns just like this one was put on a man's head up there at the governor's place today. I couldn't believe it myself ...except that I was there when it happened. The soldiers just placed this crown of thorns right on his head and pushed it down until it fit real tight. Oh, it was perhaps the most cruel thing to which I have ever been party.

Well, the reason I was there wasn't because I wanted to be. You see, I was just sitting out by the city wall as I do every morning, trying to sell some of my baskets. Actually, today was a very slow day. I wasn't having much luck selling a single one. But as I sat there I saw a crowd gathering off in the distance near the governor's place. It seemed to be a very loud group of people. There was a lot of shouting and chanting going on. I couldn't make out what was being said because they were too far away ...and my hearing isn't so good anymore. So I sat there squinting at the crowd, trying to get a clue as to what might be taking place, when I saw two Roman soldiers coming toward me. They were running and I thought something was happening just past me. But they didn't turn in any direction ...they kept coming toward me. With haste, I started to gather up my baskets because I didn't want any trouble, but before I could get my things together they arrived.

One of the soldiers grabbed me by the arm and said, "Come, old woman. You are needed."

"But my baskets," I protested. "Who will watch my baskets?"

"Leave them," the other soldier told me. "You have more important things to make today," he said as they both looked at each other and laughed.

Well, it seemed like it took forever to get up to the governor's place. These old legs don't move as quickly as they used to and I was stiffening with fright. The crowd of people there was even bigger than I thought. The soldiers pushed their way through to the center of the mob, dragging me with them. I then noticed a peculiar man standing with hands bound awkwardly in front of him like this and his clothes all torn and bloodied. The soldiers stood in a circle around him, tossing him from one side of the circle to the other as if they were tossing a coconut -like the children do when they play.

Then one of the soldiers who dragged me there put a basket full of branches in front of me. The branches all had long, sharp- looking thorns on them. "Okay, basket maker," barked the soldier, "twist up a crown for the king!"

I was confused by the request. "A crown made of branches with thorns?" I thought. "What sort of king would wear such a crown?" Then I heard the things the soldiers were saying as they toyed with the man, tossing him back and forth like a plaything.

"Now then, if you are indeed the Son of God, tell us who it was who just hit you? Yeah, King of the Jews, where's your throne? Where's your great army who will protect you?" The soldiers kept laughing and taunting him, saying these insulting things as I stood watching, perplexed about what was happening.

"Make the crown," grunted the soldier as he poked my neck with the blade of his sword, or you die today." So I quickly picked up two branches of thorns and I nervously started to twist them together ...as if I were making a circular basket ...about the size of a man's head. It took me several minutes to complete the crown. It was very painful working with thorns, as I was constantly being pricked and stabbed by them.

Finally, I completed the project and the soldier roughly yanked the crown from my hands. I was then pushed back into the crowd and could no longer see the man they taunted.

Soon after losing sight of him, I heard voices making the sound of horns like they were mimicking a royal entry and I listened as the crowd gasped and then cheered. I can only imagine that they must have pushed the crown made of thorns down onto the head of that man in bloody, torn clothes whom they taunted as king. I tried to see him, but I could not. Someone in the dense crowd near me shouted, "Hail ! King of the Jews. There is your crown. Wear it and bleed!" I retreated from that place as quickly as these weary old legs would allow.

All day long I have been wondering about what crime it is this poor man could be accused of to deserve such cruel treatment. He seemed harmless enough, yet the soldiers mocked him and the crowd taunted him mercilessly. They called him a king, but it had to be in jest since they treated him ...not like he was a king but more like a rag doll! And the crown they forced me to twist out of thorn branches ... like this one...how could anyone torment a man in that way? His crime must be unlike any other to receive such treatment.

So this is what happened to me today. I know my husband and I know he wouldn't believe me if I told this story outright. This is why I had to make this second crown to show to her. What about you? Do you believe me? Or do you think this is just another tall tale? Oh, but I tell you it's true. This is what they forced me to make, and they put it upon his head and pushed it down to make it fit ...and to make him bleed. I don't know why. He didn't look to be such a criminal as to deserve this torture. But he must have done something very wrong. Wouldn't you think? That's all I can figure. He must be a horrible, wicked man for them to treat him so. I must admit, when I saw him ever so briefly ...he looked harmless enough. But it just goes to show that one cannot judge a man based solely on his appearance. That man must be wretched to his core.