



Simon of Cyrene has been all but forgotten, yet he deserves a special place in Christendom, and perhaps in Heaven. Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, bore the sins of the world in Gethsemane and as he hung on a wooden cross. Simon of Cyrene was the man Roman soldiers forced to bear that ugly piece of wood when the Savior was too battered and exhausted to do so. This novel is about him. It is a feeble attempt to pay tribute to the man who helped the Savior when others turned their backs on him.

*It was the stinging lash of the whip as it bit into Simon's back that made him scream in pain, stop in the middle of his stride and spin around to face his new attacker. "Come here," the Roman commanded again.*

*Gritting his teeth against the pain, Simon didn't focus on the centurion, but at the sweat and blood covered man who lay sprawled in the street. "Pick up the cross!" he shouted, pointing to the man who lay in the street. "Carry it for him."*

*Simon hunched his shoulders against the mob's vicious yelling, screaming and taunting and began walking toward the battered body. "The involuntary quivering of the depleted muscles in the man's arms and legs was the only hint that he was alive. The heavy wooden beam lay across his shoulder and the back of his head, pinning him face down firmly against the street's rough stones. He was trapped where he had fallen, too exhausted to move and unable to even shove the heavy beam from his shoulder.*

*Dropping to his knees, Simon pushed the beam aside and gently lifted the tortured man's head from the rough street and cradled it in the crook of his arm. ¶ Reaching out, he tenderly brushed strands of sweat soaked hair that was caked with dried blood away from Jesus' face and stroked his cheek lightly. ¶ Reaching up, he gently pulled on the crown of thorns. ¶ When nothing happened, he tugged harder, freeing some of the sharp spikes from his scalp and causing little rivulets of blood to begin flowing afresh. ¶ There should have been a gasp of pain as the sharp spikes pulled free, but there was nothing more than a slight groan from the spent man as he opened his eyes and looked into Simon's face.*