

THE DIVINE SISTER

Mother Superior, Jeremy (1 woman, 1 man)

1960's Pittsburgh. Jeremy, a movie executive, seeks out the Mother Superior of St. Veronica's convent and school. They had been lovers many years before Reverend Mother joined the convent. Jeremy wants to purchase the screen rights to the story of one her postulants who has miraculous healing powers.

JEREMY

Reverend Mother? That's a high muckety muck, isn't it?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I have many responsibilities.

JEREMY

I always knew that you be the best at anything you chose to do.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

In a religious order, we don't think of ourselves in any way as "best."

JEREMY

From what I hear, you've become an important figure in this community.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I'm merely spreading God's love. The neighborhood is ever changing. A new clinic just opened around the corner, devoted to women's health and reproductive choices. (*Grimly*) We'll see what we can do about that.

JEREMY

(quickly changing the subject)

Do you still sing? I remember you had a lovely voice.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Thank you for remembering. I occasionally belt out a few numbers in moments of spiritual reflection.

JEREMY

A pity no one else gets to hear you.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Ah, you were always trying to lure me into a career in show business.

JEREMY

Perhaps to lure you away from journalism. I didn't appreciate the competition. You were a damn good reporter. Pardon the expression.

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MOTHER SUPERIOR

You're forgiven this time.

JEREMY

In your present life, are there opportunities for you to write?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Oh yes. But I use that gift not to exploit tragic events but to serve God. In fact, I've written a book that is about to be published.

JEREMY

That's wonderful. What sort of book?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

My reaction to a modern world gone astray. What is perceived as a march to freedom, I consider a march towards damnation. I seek a return to the values and morality of an earlier simpler time. My book is titled "The Middle Ages. So Bad?"

JEREMY

You'll be opening yourself up to a storm of controversy.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Jeremy, you didn't travel all the way to Pittsburgh to discuss my literary efforts.

JEREMY

I'm not sure what I'm looking for. All I know is everything I've accomplished feels meaningless and I find myself plagued by insecurities.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

God is the only answer to man's insecurity.

JEREMY

Perhaps that's why I needed to see you.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

We shall do our best to provide guidance. Jeremy, are you currently working for a newspaper?

JEREMY

No. I gave up journalism a while back. A few years ago, a film company acquired my services by dangling an impressive paycheck in front of me.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

A film company?

JEREMY

I'm engaged in the acquisition and development of new properties.

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MOTHER SUPERIOR

I'm sure fascinating stories can be found in the most unlikely of places.

JEREMY

Frequently.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Even within the walls of a convent. Perhaps a young postulant who sees heavenly visions and has the power to heal could be the premise of a successful motion picture.

JEREMY

It would be a film that could bring inspiration to millions of people around the world.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

And make millions of dollars for your company. Shall we drop all pretense? This nonsense of your search for life's meaning was simply a ruse to talk business with me.

JEREMY

Please, Susan, you mustn't think that I came here merely to –

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I have received numerous requests from your company and ripped them all to shreds. I should have known they would send you as their devil's messenger.

JEREMY

Yes, they sent me here to purchase the rights to Agnes's story but I jumped at the opportunity –

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I have no doubt you did. Jumped high.

JEREMY

I jumped at the opportunity of seeing you again. When I learned that the Mother Superior was the former Susan Appleyard, it seemed like, well, a gift from God.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

How dare you make a mockery of His name? If you so longed to see me, why didn't you seek me out twenty years ago? Why did you abandon me with nary a look back?

JEREMY

I thought a nun renounced all past bitterness.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

We are not perfect creatures.

JEREMY

Then let's forget about the past. It's no secret that your school is in serious trouble. The financial rewards you could reap from this film sale could solve all of your problems.

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MOTHER SUPERIOR

I will not exploit that young girl for my own ends.

JEREMY

Perhaps this will be an added inducement. Quite coincidentally, I am a close friend of Mrs. Morris Levinson.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

How do you know Mrs. Levinson?

JEREMY

Her husband was a great friend of my father. In fact, I'm her houseguest while I'm here in Pittsburgh. I consider her a beloved Aunt.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

How touching.

JEREMY

I know you paid her a rather disastrous call yesterday. I believe I could be instrumental in persuading her to make a sizeable donation to St. Veronica's.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Now you are stooping to blackmail. I really must thank you, Jeremy. You have erased any bittersweet memory of us that may have lingered in my mind. Now please go, and tell your colleagues in Hollywood that the Sisters of St. Veronica's are not for sale. Good day.

(Jeremy exits.)

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