

PAUL. Why don't you just admit it: you're the one who's too scared! You don't want anyone to see the big, brave reporter let her guard down and admit she's got feelings.

SALLY. Feelings don't win you a Pickering. And they certainly won't get you the front page.

PAUL. No, but they do make you human.

SALLY. Paul, I— I mean, I'm—

PAUL. Forget it. Let's just do our job and get on with it.

SALLY. Sure. Grab my coat first, though, if you? It's in the trunk.

(PAUL opens the trunk. The voices of PHILAMENA and AUGUSTA are heard offstage.)

SISTER AUGUSTA. Mother Superior, she's arrived.

(PAUL has no time to go elsewhere, so he hides in the trunk. PHILAMENA and AUGUSTA enter with SISTER MARY CATHERINE.)

SISTER PHILAMENA. *(Seeing SALLY:)* Oh, hello! Who are you?

SALLY. I'm Sal— *(Stops herself and extends her hand.)* Sister Mary.

SISTER PHILAMENA. Sister Mary?

SISTER AUGUSTA. But this is Sister Mary.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Mary Catherine. Which one are you?

SALLY. Excuse me?

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Which Mary? I'm Mary Catherine, and you're Mary...?

SALLY. Mary?

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Sister Mary Mary?

SALLY. Well, Bloody Mary was already taken.

(PHILAMENA and AUGUSTA look shocked.)

That's just a little joke.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Oh, I get it! Like the cocktail!

SISTER AUGUSTA. Shhhh...you mustn't talk about...you-know-what...here. Mother Superior feels drinking is one of the greatest sins one can commit.

SISTER PHILAMENA. She says it leads to a life of vice and sin. She's quite passionate about it. She won't even let us say the word.

We have to say "you-know-what," or "Satan's bathwater" or "the devil's hair tonic," or something like that.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. I didn't know. Please forgive me!

SISTER PHILAMENA. Sister Augusta and I didn't know you were living with us as well, Sister Mary Mary.

SALLY. Yes, I was sent here by, um, Cardinal whatshisname...

SISTER AUGUSTA. Redding?

SALLY. Yes, Cardinal Redding!

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. What a coincidence! He's responsible for my being here as well! And what a coincidence we've arrived on the same day! And we have almost the same name! You're not an orphan too, are you?

SALLY. Can't say that I am.

SISTER PHILAMENA. Oh, Sister Mary! You're an orphan?

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. My entire family was killed in a terrible car accident outside of Paris. I was brought up in an orphanage for girls. Every one of us became nuns. It was sort of expected.

(Beat.)

Except for one girl. She started a softball team.

SISTER AUGUSTA. I'll tell Mother Superior you've arrived, Mary Catherine.

SISTER PHILAMENA. And I'll prepare another room.

(They exit.)

SALLY. *(Awkward silence. Finally...)* So, Sister Mary Catherine... how's nun life treating you?

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Can you keep a secret, Sister Mary Mary?

SALLY. You'd be amazed!

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. I'm not really a nun! I mean, I'm training to be one, but I'm still a novice. I talked with Cardinal Redding and he's allowing me to stay here while I finish up my training. They don't take novices at this order, so I'm pretending that I've already entered the Sisterhood. I've been saddled with guilt ever since I replaced my novice whites with this gown. Please don't tell Mother Superior! I don't want to have to go back. I just know that The Sisters of Perpetual Sewing is my destiny!

SALLY. Honey, I won't tell a soul. The way I see it, it's sort of like living with your boyfriend before marrying him.

(Seeing the shocked look on MARY CATHERINE's face.)

Spiritually, I mean.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. How long have you been a sister, Sister Mary Mary?

SALLY. Oh, uh...it seems like such a short time. But I guess it's been since I was...uh...nine?

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Nine! I've never heard of anyone that young being allowed into the Sisterhood.

SALLY. Oh, well, uh...I was in the program for exceptionally pious kids. My brother became a priest when he was seven.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Oh my! It must seem almost a burden to have so much goodness in you.

SALLY. It's the cross I bear. *(Realizing her gaffe:)* Which isn't to make light of the cross Jesus bore. Uh, I think I'll just pray quietly for a moment.

(Sally crosses herself, but realizes she doesn't know the proper way to do so. MARY CATHERINE looks on, slightly confused. SALLY smiles, then tries a different order. She is still confused. She begins an elaborate series of hand movements, then drops to her knees to pray.)

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Entering with AUGUSTA:)* Sister Mary Catherine? I'm afraid I wasn't expecting you.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. Cardinal Manning said he'd sent a letter. Perhaps it hasn't arrived.

SISTER AUGUSTA. Mother Superior, wasn't that the letter you got last week?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. Sister Augusta, could you please show Sister Mary Catherine to her room? She'll be in the room next to Sister Mary—oh dear, what's your second name?

SALLY. Mary.

MOTHER SUPERIOR. No, dear, your second name?

SALLY. Mary.

SISTER MARY CATHERINE. It's Sister Mary Mary, Mother Superior.