

PAUL. I beg your pardon?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. In confession you see sinners all the time. Say that there was a person who had committed a great sin: they disguised themselves as a member of the Church to spy on someone. Could you tell just by looking at that person?

PAUL. I d-d-don't know what you mean...

MOTHER SUPERIOR. I believe I have that gift. I can spot a phony right away.

PAUL. Mother Superior, I d-don't know who you're ref-ferring to.

MOTHER SUPERIOR. May I be frank with you, Father Paul?

(PAUL nods nervously.)

There is a deceiver in this very convent!

PAUL. Wh-wh-wh-what?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. Father, you're stuttering.

PAUL. I j-j-j-just, I mean, I j-j-j-... (Desperately composing himself:) A deceiver?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. Imagine Sister Mary's audacity to lie in a house of charity!

PAUL. (Horrified:) Oh. So you know about Sister Mary, then?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. It is painfully clear that Rome sent Sister Mary Catherine to spy on us.

PAUL. Mary Catherine?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. Yes, Father. She arrived late last night.

PAUL. (Greatly relieved:) Oh! Mary Catherine!

MOTHER SUPERIOR. Father, as much as I abhor myself for what I'm about to ask you, I feel I must, for the good of this convent.

PAUL. What would you like me to do?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. Disguise yourself as a nun!

PAUL. I beg your pardon?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. I need you to dress up like a nun so you can spy on Sister Mary Catherine. Oh, I know it sounds sinful, and I must sound crazy, but I'm desperate! I need someone to watch her and let me know what she's up to. She's already met everyone else, or I'd never ask you to do this. Please, Father, the future of The Sisters of Perpetual Sewing depends on it!

PAUL. But isn't that deceitful? You were just saying...?

MOTHER SUPERIOR. I said what she is doing is deceitful; a person dressing as clergy. But you're clergy dressing as clerics. Please, Father! You're my only hope!

(Hearing voices off:)

Here she comes. Hide in here!

(She shoves him in the closet.)

I don't want her to see you.

(MOTHER SUPERIOR hides in the pressing room.)

PAUL. *(Within:)* I don't want to do this!

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Within:)* Please, Father!

PAUL. *(Within:)* No!

(MARY CATHERINE walks in and picks up spool of thread. AUGUSTA, trailing behind, hides behind the trunk and whispers.)

SISTER AUGUSTA. Confess! Confess!

(MARY CATHERINE screams, drops the thread and rushes scared to death. AUGUSTA follows.)

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Opening her door:)* Please, Father!

PAUL. *(Opening his door:)* No!

MOTHER SUPERIOR. I beg of you!

PAUL. No!

(MARY CATHERINE rushes back on. MOTHER SUPERIOR and PAUL close their doors. MARY CATHERINE cautiously picks up her thread.)

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Within:)* Please!

PAUL. *(Within:)* No!

(MARY CATHERINE looks up towards Heaven on the Pleasees and down towards Hell on the following Nos.)

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Within:)* Please!

PAUL. *(Within:)* No!

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Within:)* Please!

PAUL. *(Within:)* No!

MOTHER SUPERIOR. *(Within:)* Pleeeeease!

PAUL. *(Within:)* Noooooo!