

A BAYOU MYSTIC FILMS PRODUCTION

BOUDREAUX

THE 13TH SACRIFICE

Written & Directed by Antonio R. Ward Jr. • New Orleans, 1938

CASTING SIDES — SELF-TAPE

MOTHER AGNES

SUPPORTING • AGE: 55–70

THE CHARACTER

The Mother Superior of St. Catherine's Convent Academy. Calm the way deep water is calm; she has run the school for a generation and buried more girls' troubles than the diocese will ever know. She adjusts a single lily by an inch until it satisfies a private sense of rightness only she can perceive — and then gives you the whole of her attention, and the whole of it is considerable.

Agnes is wisdom without softness and authority without cruelty — the one adult in Scarlet's life who asks her what she loves instead of what she costs. Later in the story she must also carry steel over a breaking heart. Stage presence and absolute stillness are the audition here; she never hurries, and she never repeats herself.

ABOUT THE SCENE

Scarlet's first morning at the convent. Agnes takes the measure of a new girl the way a gardener studies new ground, and asks the one question no adult has ever asked her. The 'gardens' speech should land like a gift, not a lecture. The reader plays SCARLET.

SELF-TAPE INSTRUCTIONS

- Slate: name, height, location, representation (if any), and the role you are reading for.
- Frame from the chest up, in good light, with a neutral background. Reader off-camera.
- Period voice welcome, but truth first — do not let the accent drive the scene.
- Two takes maximum. Label your file: LASTNAME_FIRSTNAME_MOTHER.

INT. MOTHER AGNES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A quiet room. Warm wood, worn Bibles, a slant of colored light through one high window, the smell of beeswax and old paper and lilies. A crucifix on the wall, and beneath it, a single white lily in a plain vase.

MOTHER AGNES, early sixties, stands with her back to the door, unhurried, adjusting that one lily by no more than an inch until it satisfies some private sense of rightness only she can perceive. She is calm the way deep water is calm. She has run this place for a generation and buried more girls' troubles than the diocese will ever know.

Only when the lily is correct does she turn and give Scarlet the whole of her attention -- and the whole of it is considerable.

MOTHER AGNES

Miss Boudreaux. Sit, if you like,
or stand, if sitting feels like
surrender. Both are permitted
here.

(a small smile)

You've traveled a very long road.
Though not, I think, a very great
distance.

SCARLET

(uncertain what she means)

...Thank you, Mother.

Mother Agnes studies her. Not unkindly. The way a gardener studies new ground.

MOTHER AGNES

Tell me something, and tell me the
true answer, not the raised one.
What do you enjoy learning?

(off Scarlet's blank look)

Not what your tutors enjoy
teaching. Not what your father
enjoys paying for. You. What
lights you.

And Scarlet has no answer ready, because in seventeen years no adult has ever once asked her the question. She has been asked what she studies. Never what she loves.

SCARLET

(finally, quietly, almost
a confession)

...Gardens.

Mother Agnes's smile arrives -- not at the answer, but at

the honesty of it, at the small door it opened.

MOTHER AGNES

Good. Gardens are the best of
teachers. They keep no schedule
but their own. They bloom when
they are ready, child, and not one
hour before -- and there is not a
father in Louisiana rich enough to
hurry them.

The words land somewhere deep in Scarlet, though she
couldn't yet say why.

MOTHER AGNES

Sister Francis will see to the
rest. She oversees the new girls
-- and most of their happiness, if
I know her at all. Go on. She's
just down the hall.