

Play God For Me...

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FADE IN:

EXT. GREYSTONE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

A magnificent Palladian fronted by a manicured lawn of lush St. Augustine grass. The size of which would put Jeff Bezos to shame.

The night is silent, save for crickets in the distance.

We FIND SISTER LUKE, 23, standing tentatively. She's a tired version of pretty, a smile and a good rest shy of stealing your heart.

She unlocks the door, looks down at the thresh-hold.

A cluster of plants -- primordial, dark petals, thorned stalks, everything about them screams, "keep away."

She uses gardening scissors nearby to dig one up. Looks at it. And somehow, finds the courage to step inside.

INT. GREYSTONE'S ESTATE - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

A private hospice has been set-up in a grand bedroom.

HORATIO (20s), lies in bed, intubated and ventilated. Monitors tracking his compromised life functions.

Sister Luke pulls up a chair, sits down beside Horatio. She puts a hand atop his hand and just sits with him.

In FOREGROUND... DR. HELDENS (40), stands in the doorway.

SISTER LUKE

Horatio can you hear me...?

DR. HELDENS

I'm sorry, sister. He never will.

SISTER LUKE

Will he die?

DR. HELDENS

No, his vital signs are stable.

SISTER LUKE

Well I don't understand. You said the tests were promising.

DR. HELDENS

The final results are in, the
brain damage is irreversible.

SISTER LUKE

What is the prognosis?

DR. HELDENS

I'm sorry, but he will never come
out of his coma.

SISTER LUKE

How long can he live in this kind
of limbo?

DR. HELDENS

On life support, indefinitely.

SISTER LUKE

God, that's terrible. Why don't
you let him go?

DR. HELDENS

They only teach us to prolong
life.

SISTER LUKE

All they teach you is to prolong
death.

DR. HELDENS

Hospital policy has taken that out
of our hands.

SISTER LUKE

If the plug was pulled on that
machine he would die, right?

DR. HELDENS

Most likely.

SISTER LUKE

Then it's God's will that he die.

DR. HELDENS

I cannot speak for God. I can only
speak for man.

INT. GREYSTONE'S ESTATE - PARLOR - NIGHT

Elegantly decorated with turn-of-the-century antiques.
Sister Luke stands. At that precise moment...

AGNES GREYSTONE, 50s, the family matriarch; *Rose Kennedy-esque*, distinguished and imposing, approaches Sister Luke -- smiles WARMLY, happy to see her.

AGNES

Sister Luke, I'm worried about you.

Sister Luke turns to her, speaking to Agnes with a tone of respectful concern.

SISTER LUKE

Don't be. I'm a good soldier. I learned it from you.

AGNES

Is that how I come off to you? A good soldier?

SISTER LUKE

Never explain and never complain. That's the Agnes Greystone way.

AGNES

The idea that I could have taught you that it's admirable to suffer in silence breaks my heart.

SISTER LUKE

I never said you taught me to suffer in silence.

AGNES

Oh, I see.

SISTER LUKE

Horatio loved life. This isn't living. And he wouldn't want this.

AGNES

How many times do we have to have this conversation? It's against the law.

SISTER LUKE

The law of man?

AGNES

And the law of God!

She holds Agnes' angry stare. But she doesn't back down. No. She simply takes a moment, then... soft and slow...

SISTER LUKE

You're kidding yourself, you're selling him false hope -- we both know how this is going to end! Your delusions are just hurting him more. He's in pain. He needs to sleep now...in peace. We need to help him... sleep.

She meets her mother's piercing gaze. Holds it steady.

SISTER LUKE

I'm sorry, mother. I really am.

A tense beat. Agnes is on her feet, snapping in fury.

AGNES

I'm a mother, a devote catholic. Not a priest. You want absolution? Ask God.

Off Agnes' fraught, overwhelmed emotion --

INT. GREYSTONE'S ESTATE - FOYER - NIGHT

Agnes chases after Sister Luke, ascending the staircase.

AGNES

I'm Catholic. I know it's old fashioned but I still believe in sin. Remember sin? Right and wrong? I don't know if it's harps and pearly gates but whatever it is, you and I are not going to the same place.

She doesn't respond, but PAINED by Agnes' comment.

Then suddenly Agnes' bravado dissolves and she tears up.

AGNES

I'll call the police. I mean it.

Sister Luke gives her a comforting smile, but there's something underneath it... concern, resolve...

SISTER LUKE

Maybe it's better if you wait here then.

Agnes, alone now, *hot-potatoes* her cell, taking it all in. Confronted with her own dogma. A *crack in the ice*.

A shrine of PHOTOS of her son and daughter. Pictures from healthier and happier times: smiling with their mother.

Agnes lifts a photo of *Sister Luke, 7, in her communion dress*. She tries to inhale her tears, but it's useless.

Agnes shuts her eyes, whispers a hushed -

AGNES

Dear God, help us.

INT. GREYSTONE'S ESTATE - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Sister Luke sits next to Horatio, her head buried in her hands. Whimpers in pain. Agnes watches her from the door.

AGNES

The Book of Luke tells us to forgive and be forgiven. But often there's nothing more difficult.

Agnes leans down on her level, intimate, kind.

AGNES

The lord would never abandon one of his children. Neither will I.

She wraps her protective arms around her daughter - Sister Luke warms to her mother's embrace.

SISTER LUKE

Oh, dear God. I believe in the sanctity of life. Please forgive me for wanting to make decisions for you.

AGNES

Good-bye, Horatio.

Amidst the tension, Agnes SWITCHES his life support OFF.

AGNES

Sister Luke, his rites.

She kisses Horatio on his forehead - fingers her rosary.

SISTER LUKE

Through this holy anointing, and by his most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon you what sins you have committed.

A faint, unsettling WHEEZING sound comes from Horatio as he takes his last breath's.

Mother and daughter cling to one another... and weep.

After several beats, an ALARM sounds...

FADE OUT.