

Doubt The Parable
By John Patrick Shanley

Father Flynn: May I come in?

Sister A: We would require a third party.

FF: What was Donald's mother doing here?

SA: A third party would truly be required father.

FF: No sister no third party, you and me are due for a
Talk. You have to stop this campaign against me

SA: You can stop it at any time

FF: How?

SA: Confess and resign.

FF: You are attempting to destroy my reputation!
But the result of all this is going to be your
removal, not mine!

SA: What are you doing in this school?

FF: I am trying to do good.

SA: Or even more to the point, what are you doing in
in the priesthood.

FF: You are single-handedly holding this school and
this parish back.

SA: From What!

FF: Progressive education and a welcoming church.

SA: You can't distract me Father Flynn. This isn't
about my behavior, it's about yours.

FF: It's about your unfounded suspicions.

SA: That's right, I have my suspicions.

FF: You know what I haven't understood through all
this? Why do you suspect me? What have I done?

SA: You gave a boy wine to drink and let him take
The blame.

FF: That is completely untrue! Did you talk to Mr.
McGinn?

SA: All Mr. McGinn Knows is the boy drank wine

SA: he doesn't know how he came to drink it.

FF: Does his mother have something to add to that?

SA: No.

FF: So that's it there's nothing there.

SA: I'm not satisfied

FF: Well if you're not satisfied, ask the boy then

SA: No, he'd protect you and that is what he's been doing

FF: oh, and why would he do that?

SA: Because you have seduced him.

FF: You are insane. You've got it in your head that I've corrupted this child after giving him wine, and nothing I say will change that.

SA: That's right.

FF: But correct me if I'm wrong. This has nothing

to do with the wine, not really. You had a fundamental mistrust of me before this incident! It was you that warned Sister James to be on the look out, wasn't it?

SA: That's true.

FF: So you admit it!

SA: Certainly

FF: Why?

SA: I know people

FF: That's not good enough

SA: It won't have to be.

FF: How's that?

SA: You will tell me what you've done.

FF: oh I will ?

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SA: Yes

FF: I'm not one of you rtruant boys, you know. Sister

James is convinced I'm innocent.

SA: So you talked to Sister James? Well, of course you talked to sister James

FF: Did you know that Donald's father beats him?

SA: Yes

FF: And might that account for the odd behavior Sister James noticed in the boy?

SA: It might.

FF: Then what is it? What? What did you hear, what did you see that convinced you so thoroughly?

SA: What does it matter/

FF: I want to know

SA: On the first day of the school year, I saw you touch William London's wrist. And I saw him pull away.

FF: That's all?

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SA That was all

FF But that's nothing

SA What are you writing now?

FF You leave me no choice. I'm writing down what you say. I tend to get too flustered to remember the details of an upsetting conversation, and this may be important. When I talk to the monsignor and explain why you have to be removed as the principal of this school.

SA: This morning before I spoke with Mrs. Muller, I took the precaution of calling the last parish to which you were assigned,.

Ff: What did he say?

Sa; who?

FF: The pastor?

SA: I did not speak to the pastor. I spoke to one of the nuns

Ff: You should have spoken to the pastor.

SA: Why? Do you have an understanding, you and

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Sa: he? Father Flynn, you have a history.

FF: you have no right to go rummaging through my past

SA: This is your third parish in five years.

FF: Call the pastor and ask him why I left! It was perfectly innocent

SA: I'm not calling the pastor

FF: I am a good priest! And there is nothing in my record to suggest otherwise.

SA: You will go after another child and another, until you are stopped.

FF: What nun did you speak to

SA: I wont say

FF: I've not touched a child

SA: you have

FF: You have not the slightest proof of anything

SA: But I have my certainty, and armed with that I
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will go to your last parish, and the one before that if necessary. I will find a parent, Father Flynn! Trust me I will. A parent who probably doesn't know that you are still working with children! And once I do that, you will be exposed. You may even be attacked,

metaphorically or otherwise.

FF: you have no right to act on your own! You are a member of a religious order. You have taken vows, obedience being one! You answer to us! You have no right to step outside the church!

SA: I will step outside the church if that's what needs to be done, though the door should shut behind me!

Now did you give Donald Muller wine to drink?

FF: Please! Are we people? Am I a person flesh and blood like you? Or are we just ideas and convictions. I can't say everything. Do you understand? There are things I can't say. Even if you can't imagine the explanation, sister, remember that there are circumstances beyond your knowledge. Even if you feel certainty, it is an emotion and not a fact. In the spirit of charity, I appeal to you. On behalf of my life's work. You have to behave responsibly. I put myself in your hands.

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SA: I don't want you.

SA: You are a cheat. The warm feelings you experienced when that boy looked at you with trust

was not the sensation of virtue. It can be got by a drunkard from his tot of rum. You are a disgrace to the collar. The only reason you haven't been thrown out of the Church is the decline in vocations

FF: I can fight you.

SA: You will loose

FF: You can't know that!

SA: I know

FF: Where's your compassion?

SA: Nowhere you can get at it. Stay here Compose yourself Use the phone if you like. Good day, Father. I have no sympathy for you I know you're invulnerable to true regret. And Cut your Nails

FF: Yes, This is Father Brendan Flynn of ST. Nicholas Parish. I need to make an appointment to see the bishop.