

Agnes – young

AGNES OF GOD JOHN PIELMEIER

First presented in a staged reading at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference in 1979 at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1980. It opened on Broadway at the Music Box Theatre in 1982.

Doctor Martha Livingstone has been appointed by the Court to assess Agnes, a young nun accused of killing her new-born baby. Agnes is a simple girl who has spent most of her life in the convent with little or no contact with the outside world. She denies all knowledge of a baby. The Mother Superior objects strongly to her being questioned and applies to have the Doctor taken off the case, but eventually Agnes agrees to submit to hypnosis in order to build up a picture of what happened to her.

In this earlier scene, Doctor Livingstone asks Agnes how babies are born.

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Agnes

I don't know what you're talking about! You want to talk about the baby, everybody wants to talk about the baby, but I never saw the baby, so I can't talk about the baby, because I don't believe in the baby! . . . No! I'm tired of talking! I've been talking for weeks! And nobody believes me when I tell them anything! Nobody listens to me! . . . Where do you think babies come from? . . . Well, I think they come from when an angel lights on their mother's chest and whispers into her ear. That makes good babies start to grow. Bad babies come from when a fallen angel squeezes in down there, and they grow and grow until they come out down there. I don't know where good babies come out. *(Silence)* And you can't tell the difference except that bad babies cry a lot and make their fathers go away and their mothers get very ill and die sometimes. Mummy wasn't very happy when *she* died and I think she went to hell because every time I see her she looks like she just stepped out of a hot shower. And I'm never sure if it's her or the Lady who tells me things. They fight over me all the time. The Lady I saw when I was ten. I was lying on the grass looking at the sun and the sun became a cloud and the cloud became the Lady, and she told me she would talk to me and then her feet began to bleed and I saw there were holes in her hands and in her side and I tried to catch the blood as it fell from the sky but I couldn't see any more because my eyes hurt because there were big black spots in front of them. And she tells me things like – right now she's crying 'Marie! Marie!' but I don't know what that means. And she uses me to sing. It's as if she's throwing a big hook through the air and it catches me under my ribs and tries to pull me up but I can't move because Mummy is holding my feet and all I can do is sing in her voice, it's the Lady's voice, God loves you! *(Silence)* God loves you. *(Silence)* . . . I don't want to talk anymore, all right? I just want to go home.