

MRS. MULLER
SISTER ALOYSIUS

EIGHT

Crossfade to the principal's office. Sister Aloysius is sitting looking out the window, very still. A knock at the door. She doesn't react. A second knock, louder. She pulls a small earplug out of her ear and scurries to the door. She opens it. There stands Mrs. Muller, a black woman of about thirty-eight, in her Sunday best, dressed for church. She's on red alert.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Mrs. Muller?

MRS. MULLER. Yes.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Come in. *(Sister Aloysius closes the door.)*
Please have a seat.

MRS. MULLER. I thought I might have had the wrong day when you didn't answer the door.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Oh. Yes. Well, just between us, I was listening to a transistor radio with an earpiece. *(She shows Mrs. Muller a very small transistor radio.)* Look at how tiny they're making them now. I confiscated it from one of the students, and now I can't stop using it.

MRS. MULLER. You like music?

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Not really. News reports. Years ago I used to listen to all the news reports because my husband was in Italy in the war. When I came into possession of this little radio, I found myself doing it again. Though there is no war and the voices have changed.

MRS. MULLER. You were a married woman?

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Yes. But then he was killed. Is your husband coming?

MRS. MULLER. Couldn't get off work.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. I see. Of course. It was a lot to ask.

MRS. MULLER. How's Donald doing?

SISTER ALOYSIUS. He's passing his subjects. He has average grades.

MRS. MULLER. Oh. Good. He was upset about getting taken off the altar boys.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Did he explain why?

MRS. MULLER. He said he was caught drinking wine.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. That is the reason.

MRS. MULLER. Well, that seems fair. But he's a good boy, Sister. He fell down there, but he's a good boy pretty much down the line. And he knows what an opportunity he has here. I think the whole thing was just a bit much for him.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. What do you mean, the whole thing?

MRS. MULLER. He's the only colored here. He's the first in this school. That'd be a lot for a boy.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. I suppose it is. But he has to do the work of course.

MRS. MULLER. He is doing it though, right?

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Yes. He's getting by. He's getting through. How is he at home?

MRS. MULLER. His father beat the hell out of him over that wine.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. He shouldn't do that.

MRS. MULLER. You don't tell my husband what to do. You just stand back. He didn't want Donald to come here.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Why not?

MRS. MULLER. Thought he'd have a lot of trouble with the other boys. But that hasn't really happened as far as I can make out.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Good.

MRS. MULLER. That priest, Father Flynn, been watching out for him.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Yes. Have you met Father Flynn?

MRS. MULLER. Not exactly, no. I seen him on the altar, but I haven't met him face to face. No. Just, you know, heard from Donald.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. What does he say?

MRS. MULLER. You know, Father Flynn, Father Flynn. He looks up to him. The man gives him his time, which is what the boy needs. He needs that.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Mrs. Muller, we may have a problem.

MRS. MULLER. Well, I thought you must a had a reason for asking me to come in. Principal's a big job. If you stop your day to talk to me, must be something. I just want to say though, it's just till June.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Excuse me?

MRS. MULLER. Whatever the problem is, Donald just has to make it here till June. Then he's off into high school.

SISTER ALOYSIUS. Right.