

Agnes Side #1

AGNES. From God.
 DOCTOR. *After God, before the wastepaper basket.*
 AGNES. I don't understand.
 DOCTOR. How are babies born?
 AGNES. Don't you know?
 DOCTOR. Yes, I think I do, but I want you to . . . (tell me.)
 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!
 DOCTOR. Then let's talk about something else.
 AGNES. 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!
 DOCTOR. I'll listen. That's my job.
 AGNES. But I don't want to have to answer any more questions.
 DOCTOR. Then how would you like to ask them?
 AGNES. What do you mean?
 DOCTOR. Just like that. You ask, I'll answer.
 AGNES. Anything?
 DOCTOR. Anything. (*a beat*)
 AGNES. What's your real name?
 DOCTOR. Martha Louise Livingston.
 AGNES. Are you married?
 DOCTOR. No.
 AGNES. Would you like to be?
 DOCTOR. Not at the moment, no.
 AGNES. Do you have children?
 DOCTOR. No.
 AGNES. Would you like some?
 DOCTOR. I can't have them anymore.
 AGNES. Why?

DOCTOR. Well . . . stopped menstruating.
 AGNES. Why do you smoke?
 DOCTOR. Does it bother you?
 AGNES. No questions.
 DOCTOR. Smoking is an obsession with me. I started smoking when my mother died. She was an obsession, too, I suppose I'll stop smoking when I become obsessed with something else. (*silence*) I bet you're sorry you asked any more questions?
 AGNES. One.
 DOCTOR. What's that?
 AGNES. Where do you think babies come from?
 DOCTOR. From their mothers and fathers, of course. Before that, I don't know.
 AGNES. 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. Mummys wasn't very happy when she died and I think she went to hell because everytime 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

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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*)

DOCTOR. Do you know a Marie?

AGNES. No. Do you? (*silence*)

DOCTOR. Why should I?

AGNES. I don't know. (*silence*)

DOCTOR. Do you hear them often, (these voices?)

AGNES. I don't want to talk anymore, all right? I just want to go home.

ACT ONE

SCENE 5

MOTHER. Well, what do you think? Is she totally bananas or merely slightly off-center? Or maybe she's perfectly sane and just a very good liar. What have you decided?

DOCTOR. I haven't yet. What about you?

MOTHER. Me?

DOCTOR. Yes. You know her better than I do. What's your opinion?

MOTHER. Well . . . I believe that she's . . . *not* crazy. Nor is she lying.

DOCTOR. But how could she have a child and know nothing of sex and birth?

MOTHER. Because she's an innocent. She's a slate that hasn't been touched, except by God. There's no place for those facts in her mind.

DOCTOR. Oh, bullshit.

MOTHER. In her case it isn't. Her mother kept her home almost all of the time. She's had very little schooling. I don't know how her mother avoided the authorities but she did. When her mother died, Agnes came to us. She's never been "out there," Doctor. She's never seen a television show or a movie. She's never read a book.

DOCTOR. But if you believe she's so innocent, how could she murder a child?

MOTHER. She didn't. This is manslaughter, not murder. She did not consciously kill that baby. I don't know what *you'd* call it — whatever psychological medical jargon you people use — but she was not conscious at the time. That's why she's innocent. She honestly doesn't remember. She'd lost a lot of blood, she'd passed out by the time I'd found her . . .

DOCTOR. You want me to believe that she killed that baby, hid the wastepaper basket, and crawled to the door, all in some sort of mystical trance?

MOTHER. I don't care *what* you believe. You're her psychiatrist, not her jury. You're not determining her guilt.

DOCTOR. Was there ever any question of that?

MOTHER. What do you mean?

DOCTOR. Could someone else have murdered that child? (*silence*)

MOTHER. Not in the eyes of the police.

DOCTOR. And in *your* eyes?

MOTHER. I've told you what I believe.