

Doubt by John Patrick Shanley

Set in 1942, Flynn is a middle-aged priest

Beat One

(Flynn walks in with controlled fury)

Flynn: May I come in?

Aloysius: We would require a 3rd party.

Flynn: What was Donald's mother doing here?

Aloysius: We were having a chat.

Flynn: About what?

Aloysius: A 3rd party is truly required, Father.

Flynn: No Sister.

No 3rd party.

You and I are due for a talk.

Beat Two

(Flynn comes in and slams the door shut. They face each other)

Flynn: You have to stop this campaign against me!

Aloysius: You can stop it at any time.

Flynn: How?

Aloysius: Confess and resign.

Flynn: You're attempting to destroy my reputation!

But the result of all of this is going to be your removal, not mine!

Aloysius: What are you doing in this school?

Flynn: I am trying to do good!

Aloysius: Or even more to the point, what are you doing in the priesthood?

Flynn: You are single-handedly holding this school and parish back!

Aloysius: From what?

Flynn: Progressive education and a welcoming church.

Aloysius: You can't distract me Father Flynn.

This isn't about my behaviour, it's about yours.

Flynn: It's about your unfounded suspicions.

Aloysius: That's right. I have suspicions.

Beat Three

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

Aloysius: You gave that boy wine to drink.
And you let him take the blame.

Flynn: That's completely untrue!
Did you talk to Mr McGinn?

Aloysius: All McGinn knows is the boy drank wine.
He doesn't know how he came to drink it.

Flynn: Did his mother have something to add to that?

Aloysius: No.

Flynn: So that's it.
There's nothing there.

Aloysius: I'm not satisfied.

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

Aloysius: No, he'd protect you.
That's what he's been doing.

Flynn: Oh, and why would he do that?

Aloysius: Because you have seduced him.

Flynn: You're 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.

Aloysius: That's right.

Beat Four

Flynn: But correct me if I'm wrong.
This has nothing to do with the wine.
You had a fundamental mistrust of me before this incident!
It was you who warned Sister James to be on the lookout, wasn't it?!

Aloysius: That's true.

Flynn: So you admit it!

Aloysius: Certainly.

Flynn: Why?

Aloysius: I know people.

Flynn: That's not good enough!

Aloysius: It won't have to be.

Flynn: How's that?

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

Flynn: Oh I will?

Aloysius: Yes.

Flynn: I'm not one of your truant boys, you know.
Sister James is convinced I'm innocent.

Aloysius: So you talked to Sister James?
Well, of course you talked to Sister James.

Beat Five

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

Aloysius: Yes.

Flynn: And that might not account for the odd behaviour Sister James noticed in the boy?

Aloysius: It might.

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

Aloysius: What does it matter?

Flynn: I want to know.

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

Flynn: Is that all?

Aloysius: That was all.

Flynn: ...
That's nothing.

(Flynn writes in his book)

Beat Six

Aloysius: What are you writing now?

Flynn: You leave me no choice.
I am 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.

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

Flynn: What did he say?

Aloysius: Who?

Flynn: The pastor.

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

Flynn: You should have spoken to the pastor.

Aloysius: I spoke to a nun.

Flynn: That's not the proper route for you to have taken Sister!
The Church is very clear.
You're supposed to go through the pastor.

Aloysius: Why?
Do you have an understanding, you and he?
Father Flynn, you have a history.

Beat Seven

Flynn: You have no right to go rummaging through my past!

Aloysius: This is your 3rd parish in five years.

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

Aloysius: I'm not calling the pastor.

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

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

Flynn: What nun did you speak to?

Aloysius: I won't say.

Flynn: I have not touched a child.

Aloysius: You have.

Flynn: You don't have the slightest proof of anything.

Aloysius: But I have my certainty, and armed with that, I 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.

Flynn: You have no right to act on your own!
You are a member of a religious order.
You have taken vows and you answer to us!
You have no right to step outside the Church!

Aloysius: I will step outside the Church if that's what needs to be done, though the door should shut behind me!
I will do what needs to be done Father, if it means I'm damned to Hell!
You should understand that, or you will mistake me.
Now, did you give Donald Muller wine to drink?

Beat Eight

Flynn: Have you never done anything wrong?

Aloysius: I have.

Flynn: Mortal sin?

Aloysius: Yes.

Flynn: And?

Aloysius: I confessed it!

Did you give Donald Muller wine to drink?

Flynn: Whatever I've done, I have left it in the healing hands of my confessor.

So have you!

We are the same!

Aloysius: We are not the same!

A dog that bites is a dog that bites!

I do not justify what I do wrong and go on.

I admit it, desist, and take my medicine.

Did you give Donald Muller wine to drink?

Flynn: No.

Aloysius: Mental reservation.

Flynn: No.

Aloysius: You lie.

Very well then.

If you won't leave my office, I will.

And once I go, I will not stop.

(She goes to the door. Suddenly, a new tone comes into his voice)

Beat Nine

Flynn: Wait!

Aloysius: You will request a transfer from this parish.
You will take a leave of absence until it is granted.

Flynn: And do what for the love of God?
My life is here.

Aloysius: Don't.

Flynn: Please! Aren't we people? Am I not 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.

Aloysius: I don't want you.

Flynn: My reputation is at stake.

Aloysius: You can preserve your reputation.

Flynn: If you say these things, I won't be able to do my work in the community.

Aloysius: Your work in the community should be discontinued.

Flynn: You'd leave me with nothing.

Aloysius: That's not true.
It's Donald Muller who has nothing, and you took full advantage of that.

Flynn: I have not done anything wrong. I care about that boy very much.

Aloysius: Because you smile at him and sympathize with him, and talk to him as if you
were the same?

Flynn: That child needed a friend!

Aloysius: You are a cheat. The warm feeling you experienced when that boy looked at
you with trust was not the sensation of virtue. It can be got a drunkard from his
tot of rum. You're a disgrace to the collar. The only reason you haven't been
thrown out of the Church is the decline in vocations.

Flynn: I can fight you.

Aloysius: You will lose.

Flynn: You can't know that.

Aloysius: I know.

Flynn: Where's your compassion?

Aloysius: Nowhere you can get at. 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. *(Starts to go. Pause)* And cut your nails.
(She goes, closing the door behind her. After a moment, he goes to the phone and dials.)

Flynn: Yes... This is Father Brendan Flynn of St. Nicholas parish.
I need to make an appointment to see the bishop.
(Lights fade)