

Robert Anne Reading

Let's not mention this to you know who. Reverend Mother does not always appreciate my methods or my behaviour. But you gotta understand. I grew up in Carnarsie. You know where that is? Brooklyn! Yo mama! Scungili! (*pronounced skoon-JEEL-ie*) You had to be tough and I was. I was one tough kid.

See my dad was never around much and my mom had to work two jobs, so us kids were alone a lot. I was always in trouble - that's why I got sent to St Clare's. But hey , it's okay. Things have worked out. My background even paid off a little bit. Not only do I drive the convent car, I can strip it faster than any mechanic in Hoboken!

You know, a lot of the guys back in the hood still can't believe I'm a nun. But I have to tell you why - it's all because of Sister Rose Francis.

She was the Head of Saint Clare's. Boy oh boy, she was somethin' else. She was the one person who made me believe I was worth something. And I want to be just like her. Sometimes I miss St Clare's. Things were really different back then. It was a long time ago.

Reverend Mother and Hubert Reading

REV: Oh thank you. Thank you so very much. And how about a hand for our wonderful Mount Saint Helen's chorus?

Now just in case there is anyone here who hasn't heard what our little fundraiser is all about - we've had a small disaster back at the convent. You see, a little while ago, our cook, Sister Julia (*crosses herself*) Child of God, served some vichyssoise soup and nearly every sister died instantly of botulism!

HUB: It was kind of like the last supper! (*She laughs at her own joke*) That's a little convent humour!

(*Rev. Is not amused*)

REV: Why we wouldn't be here now if it hadn't been for the fact that we were off playing bingo with some Maryknoll Sisters. (*to HUB*) What a bunch of cut-throats they turned out to be, huh?

HUB: (*excitedly*) I still say their Mother Superior cheated when she didn't call B 15! I know she had it.

REV: Now, calm down Sister. Lord knows she's not pretty, but she doesn't cheat.

HUB: She does too. B 15 - I saw her slip it right up her sleeve. It was all I needed to win. But that's alright! 'Cause God don't like ugly.

REV: (*to audience*) The point is when we got back to the convent we found 52 of our sisters lying face down in that soup!

HUB: Now we had no idea what to do so we began praying for guidance.

REV: Then I had a vision. It was either Saint Catherine or Saint Thomas Aquinas in drag. I never could tell 'em apart - never having seen 'em together! Anyway I was instructed to start a greeting card company to raise funds. Well, of course I did - and it was a huge success!

HUB: So we took the money and buried 48 of the 52 sisters and then Reverend Mother bought a plasma TV for the convent. Personally I thought we should have buried all of the sisters before we bought the plasma TV, but as Mistress of the Novices, I'm only "number two" around here so one tries hard not to question the Reverend Mother.

REV: (*irritated*) And one will try -

BOTH: Harder in the future!

Amnesia Reading starts at Amnesia's "Gentle but firm"

SR. HUBERT. I just can't seem to get through to her, Reverend Mother.

REV. MOTHER. I know. I keep hoping if she remembers who she is, we'll discover she belongs to the Franciscans.

(REV. MOTHER exits left as SR. AMNESIA comes center.)

SR. HUBERT. Now, Sister Amnesia. Try to remember what I teach in the novitiate:

Gentle, but firm. *(She stomps her foot.)*

SR. AMNESIA. Gentle, but firm!

(Pause...SR. HUBERT points to SR. AMNESIA's foot and she stomps it. SR. HUBERT exits left making the sign of the cross as she goes. SR. AMNESIA takes a deep breath and snaps to attention, ruler in hand.)

Alright! Sit up straight! Eyes forward! Pay attention! Do you know what time it is?!

(She hits the palm of her hand with the ruler. It obviously hurts and she grimaces, rubbing her hand on her thigh. She reverts to her wide-eyed innocent self.)

You know, I always know what time it is. Because back at the convent we have this huge clock with the twelve apostles pasted on it. And I always know when the big hand is on the John and the little hand is on the Peter it's time for the sisters to go down on their knees... and pray!

And now it's time for that quiz that Reverend Mother warned you about. *(She takes the index cards with the questions out of her pocket and hooks the ruler on her belt.)*

Okay! Here are the questions that you should have the answers to, if you were paying attention to that last song. Could I have some lights, please? *(house lights up)*
Oh, thank-you.

Now if you know the answer, raise your hand. Are you ready? *(She waits for response, which is usually weak.)* Are you ready?! *(response)* Good! Question number one: The leper colony was established on an island south of _____.

Reverend Mother & Leo Reading starts at Rev Mother's "Sister!"

sits at the counter. Since this piece was "unexpected" some CHORUS people could also appear on the sidelines to see what it's all about. If there are "extras" watching they would leave as soon as the piece ends. "The Dying Nun Ballet" proceeds starring SR. LEO with support from SR. ROBERT ANNE who reappears with a hood over her head and a scythe as the Grim Reaper. At the end of the ballet REV. MOTHER rises from the bed.)

REV. MOTHER. Sister!

SR. LEO. Robert Anne said you'd think it was funny!

REV. MOTHER. Robert, I've about had it with you. One more time and you'll be the "dying nun!" (*pointing to SR. LEO's Flying Nun headgear*) Now get her outta that thing.

(SR. ROBERT ANNE slams the two "wings" of the hat together atop SR. LEO's head. Now she looks like a sailboat.)

SR. LEO. It was just a joke!

REV. MOTHER. Well, it wasn't funny. Who do you think you are? Sally Field?

SR. LEO. (*very indignantly*) Yes. And they liked me. They really liked me!

(SR. ROBERT ANNE pulls SR. LEO offstage left before there's any more trouble. BR. TIMOTHY enters right and helps SR. AMNESIA move the counter to center stage as SR. HUBERT imitates SR. LEO dancing. BR. TIMOTHY then exits right. The Sisters take their places behind the counter. SR. HUBERT stage left, REV. MOTHER in the center, and SR. AMNESIA stage right.)

REV. MOTHER. (*commenting on the dancing*) Hubert, stop that. She'll see you.

SR. HUBERT. Well, it was pretty funny.

REV. MOTHER. It wasn't. It's not enough that I've got to contend with Sister Robert Anne. Now, she's corrupting the novices.