

**Our Lady of Stone**  
**By Vanda**

**Cast of Characters**

**Cath Kyle** – a young woman who is an ex-nun. She is anxious and prone to tripping over her feet.

**Sister Martha** – an elderly blind nun who wears a modern habit with a cross hanging around her neck. She's seen enough of life not to take it too seriously. (This part can also be successfully played by a much younger woman who is somewhat kooky)

**Sister Dominic** – a very attractive middle aged nun with an authoritative presence. Although during the play she wears only a white bathrobe and bare feet, most of the time she holds herself as if she were in full traditional habit. As she struggles to free herself from her own rigidity, there are times when the more delicate sides of a freer self appear.

**Scene 1**

*A porch in front of a modern day convent in Northport, Long Island. The Present.*

*SISTER MARTHA sits on the porch, napping, a small book in HER hand. The porch swing on which SHE sits is surrounded by brightly colored potted flowering plants. A door leads away from the porch into the convent. In the background, "Ave Maria," plays and continues to play throughout. CATH KYLE mounts the steps of the porch, stands at a distance.*

**CATH**

Sister Martha?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Hello? Who is that?

**CATH**

Sister Martha!

**SISTER MARTHA**

A voice from the past. I know the sound, but...

**CATH**

It's me! Cath Kyle!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Catherine?! Catherine Kyle?! Get over here! Let me touch you.

**CATH**

*Moving hesitantly toward HER*

Uh...Sister, what...?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Yes, yes! It is you! It is! She sent for you. Oh, that's good. Very good. Come right in and...

*Taking CATH's arm to lead HER into house*

**CATH**

*Pulling away*

No! I mean, uh, uh, your, uh, eyes.

*Whispering*

You're blind.

**SISTER MARTHA**

I know. Catherine, I am so relieved you've come. You're just what she needs. Now, hurry right...

**CATH**

No! I mean, uh, Sister, you're blind!

**SISTER MARTHA**

You just told me that. Now, why don't you go right on in. She's waiting.

*Trying to pull CATH in*

**CATH**

*Pulling away*

Sister!

**SISTER MARTHA**

You're not going to tell me I'm blind again, are you?

**CATH**

Oh, I get it. This is a case of massive denial.

**SISTER MARTHA**

No. Glaucoma.

**CATH**

No! I mean you're really angry about this. No, angry isn't the right word. You're, you're...Furious! That's it! You're filled with a bottomless rage at the injustice! You don't deserve this! You want to strike out! Scream! Shout! Stomp your feet! Maybe even punch someone! But you don't. Instead you deny your true feelings. You put on a "demeanor" of acceptance, but you don't really accept it. You need a complete catharsis!

**SISTER MARTHA**

You're not going to make this easy for me, are you? Getting you inside.

**CATH**

Sister Martha, this is serious! You do not accept this! You don't! Admit it!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Okay. Now will you...?

**CATH**

Sister! Okay is not a catharsis! You have to cry, scream, yell! You do not accept what has happened to you. It's horrible and unfair and you're seething on the inside! You do not accept it! You don't! You can't! Please! You do accept it, don't you? You really do.

**SISTER MARTHA**

Would a yes or a no make you feel more relaxed?

**CATH**

You do accept it. You really...Damn! Oh! Sorry, Sister. But how...? How do you do it? I can't accept anything.

**SISTER MARTHA**

Time, Catherine. Time. so you're here to see...

**CATH**

Yes. Her. How is she? No! Don't tell me!

**SISTER MARTHA**

All right. Let's sit out here and enjoy this glorious day. It's going to be a real scorcher. You can smell the heat rising into the air. On late mornings like this the air gets so quiet you can hear the birds breathe. It's so good to see you again, Catherine. You look wonderful.

**CATH**

Do you really think so? Remember how I used to dress? Drove her nuts. She'd say:

*Imitating*

"Now, Cath, that is no way for a nun to dress."

*As SELF*

Not that I'm dressed this way to impress her. I don't need to impress her. She won't think I'm trying to impress her, will she? She will, won't she? I'm overdressed, aren't I?!

**SISTER MARTHA**

No.

**CATH**

You can't see. She can. (Beat) She can, can't she?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Like a hawk.

**CATH**

A hawk?! Yes. A hawk. Scouting for its prey from atop its high perch and then, then swooping down and zap! Oh, Sister, look at me! Oh, you can't do that! But she can! And will! Oh, Sister, I'm overdressed! I just know it! What am I going to do?!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Well...

**CATH**

She can't tell me how to dress.

**SISTER MARTHA**

No, she can't.

**CATH**

Not anymore, she can't.

**SISTER MARTHA**

That's right.

**CATH**

I didn't even have to come here in the first place.

**SISTER MARTHA**

No, you didn't.

**CATH**

Just because she summoned. I could have thrown this note right into the garbage.

**SISTER MARTHA**

You certainly could have.

**CATH**

I could do it now! I could! Yes! That's what I'll do! Right now! I'll rip it up!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Yes! Do it! Rip it up! Right now!

**CATH**

Listen to it! "Cath. Come to convent. 12 noon. August 21. Sister Dominic." Do you believe it"! It's like a subpoena from the Pope. Just-Come. Not even a please. No RSVP required. No acknowledgment that it's been eight-eight years! She just assumed that 'of course' I'd come.

**SISTER MARTHA**

And 'of course' you did.

**CATH**

But I didn't have to!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Oh.

**CATH**

*Hesitantly approaching door*  
So-she's in there? In her room?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Yes. Go in. She needs you.

**CATH**

Sister Dominic needs no one! And I certainly don't need her!

**SISTER MARTHA**

And you say Dominic is tough.

**CATH**

Me?! Look at her! She's demanding. Rigid. Critical.

**SISTER MARTHA**

Your friend.

**CATH**

Will you stop that, Sister Martha! I'm trying to work up a good reason to not go in and see her! If it hadn't been for her I never would've become a nun! What a waste! Oh, Sister, I didn't mean being a nun is a waste. What I meant was, uh, uh...

**SISTER MARTHA**

Yes?

**CATH**

Well, uh, uh...You see?! See what she's doing?!

**SISTER MARTHA**

No.

**CATH**

She's making me say stupid things!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Oh, I wondered who was doing that. A powerful woman, out Dominic.

**CATH**

She is not! Not to me she isn't! Not anymore! That's all in the past. I've been in therapy.

**SISTER MARTHA**

That's nice, dear.

**CATH**

Yeah. I had known since forever that I would be a musician. And then—then, she stepped into my life. Why wasn't absent that day she substituted in my senior history class? You should've seen her. Of course, she was wearing a habit. A traditional one. Was there ever a time when Dominic didn't wear a habit. Must've been cumbersome in the shower. She floated toward the oak wood desk up front and everything stopped. In that moment my life was changed. She didn't look quite real. With only the flesh of her hands and her face showing, she looked more like—like a statue. A finely sculpted statue. Of the Virgin Mary. The kind that comforts and admonishes at the same time. (Pause) I can't do this.

*Picking up purse, hurrying toward steps*

Nice seeing you again, Sister Martha. Really. But my fiancé, he—needs me. Right away so I...

**SISTER MARTHA**

Catherine, do you hear that?

**CATH**

What?

**SISTER MARTHA**

That! That, that song! That blasted song!

**CATH**

Ave Maria? Sister, you don't like...?

**SISTER MARTHA**

I love that song! Love it! But it never stops! Night and day! Day and night! Every hour, every minute, every second! Over and over and over...!

**CATH**

You mean she plays it...?

**SISTER MARTHA**

All the time! She never leaves her room! All she does is play that, that...That! It's got to stop! I can't take the injustice anymore! What did I do to deserve this fate?!

It's not fair! Make it stop! Make it stop! Please! You've got make it...!

**CATH**

Sister!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Stop! Before I, I march into her room and smash that CD! Smash it to bits! And stomp and stomp and stomp and punch and...!

**CATH**

Sister Martha, please!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Don't stop me now! I think I'm having one of those catharsises. Do you think that's what this is?

**CATH**

Looks like it.

**SISTER MARTHA**

Am I doing it right?

**CATH**

I don't know.

**SISTER MARTHA**

Well, do you feel better?

**CATH**

Me? It's you who...Sister, what are you up to?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Go to her.

**CATH**

Well...Okay. Sure. No big deal. Just another nun friend from the past.

**SISTER MARTHA**

Good. Then, you have nothing to fear.

**CATH**

Fear?! Why should I be afraid?! I'm not afraid!

**SISTER MARTHA**

Oh, please, just go. I think I feel another catharsis coming on and this one's going to be a lollipaloosa.

**CATH**

No! I'm going.

*Moving toward doorway*

Aren't you coming, too?

**SISTER MARTHA**

No, I'm going to sit out here remembering St Augustine's Confessions. The man was so filled with guilt it's a lot easier to take when I can't see the words. Catherine, people don't always live up to our expectations. Sometimes, they live up to their own.

**CATH**

What?

**SISTER MARTHA**

You'll see. Go in.

**CATH**

Right! I'll just...

*Moves to enter. Stops*

Sister?

**SISTER MARTHA**

I hope this isn't going to be another reason for not going. I'm up to St. Augustine's lust. I love this part.

**CATH**

Sister, do you believe in God?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Do I...? Yes, dear. I have to. It's in my contract.

**CATH**

Oh, right. Well, then, if you wouldn't mind, would you, between the time I, uh, leave this porch and enter her room say a prayer?

**SISTER MARTHA**

Certainly, dear. What should I pray for?

*CATH enters through convent door*

**BLACKOUT**

End of Scene 1

*Our Lady of Stone* is a one-act play with two scenes. To receive a complete reading copy, and for other contact information, please visit the *Our Lady of Stone* information page (click your browser's "Back" button, or visit: [singlelane.com/proplay/ourlady.html](http://singlelane.com/proplay/ourlady.html))