

OUR TOWN

RE (PAGES 220-224)

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

Father Jerry is mumbling words in Latin, but they're not audible because of the screaming traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike.

FATHER JERRY

If there is anyone who would like to say a word about Frances Silvestre Pino at this time, please do so.

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

No one volunteers.

FATHER JERRY

Maybe just something about how Frances contributed to your life.

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

Angie raises her hand. Father Jerry nods.

ANGIE

When I was living in Cleveland at Debbie's house she sent me a big package every Christmas. It was the clothes she was finished with. Very expensive, I'm sure of that. What did I need things with beads and sequins on them for? I'm not a fancy person. I put them in the basement in a box. I put each one in a plastic bag with mothballs. Maybe Debbie sold them or gave them away to the Salvation Army. But how would I know? She doesn't talk to me no more.

FATHER JERRY

Thank you, Angie.

(leaning close to Angie)

Your sister is in a better place now.

ANGIE

Better than the Villa Versailles?

FATHER JERRY

More peaceful. At a home far, far from all unhappiness.

ANGIE

Franny was like as shopping cart at the A&P that stops when you try to take it home. She ain't home. She's in that box.

JUDIE

(under her breath to Marcus)

Say something.

MARCUS

She never sent me sequins. If she had I would not have put them in the basement. Who could follow that anyway?

JUDIE

Just say something about what she did. We can't leave Ma at the A&P.

MARCUS

As soon as the smoke from the funeral clears , we're all gonna see how she did nothing for years.

JUDIE

This isn't smoke, it's pollution. Say something spiritual sounding, for Christ-sakes.

MARCUS

It worked for Mandy Patinkin in *Evita*. I do not know any prayers, if that is what you are asking for.

JUDIE

Eight fucking years of Catholic school and you can't think of something that ends with amen or hallelujah?

MARCUS

It's raining men, hallelujah.

JUDIE

She's your mother. Somebody but Angie has to say something. You can't just say nothing. Please, Mark.

FATHER JERRY

Let us take a silent moment to bow our heads and recall Frances one last time.

JUDIE

Oh God.

MARCUS

What?

JUDIE

They spelled her name with an "i"!

FRANCIS SILVESTRE PINO - LOVING MOTHER AND WIFE. They spelled her name wrong on her grave!

MARCUS

At least now her name is the same as Francis Albert Sinatra.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I think she would be more upset about the "loving mother and wife" than the misspelling. There are no dates. Daddy has them. Where are her dates?

JUDIE

I looked at her drivers license, the marriage certificate and a passport. They all had different years. Instead of putting something wrong, I told them to leave it off. Anyways, she would have been pissed if people knew she was older than Daddy.

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

Father Jerry moves a small pail of dirt and places it next to the gravesite.

FATHER JERRY

For as much as it has pleased our Heavenly Father in His wise providence to take unto Himself our beloved Frances Silvestre Pino we therefore commit her body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God in our Savior Jesus Christ.

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

Marcus steps forward. He looks around, and waits, making sure every fidgety eye is resting on him. He continues to stand, holding the group's attention until there is tension enough to break. The strain is ruptured with speech so clear and unforced that his words don't compete with the drone of the Turnpike, but float distinctly above that din, in a way that a melody rises over the baseline.

MARCUS

"Now there are some things we all know, but we don't take'm out and look at'm very often. We all know that something is eternal. And it ain't houses and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even the stars...everybody knows in their bones. That something is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings... There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being." Amen.

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

Marcus reaches into the pail and sprinkles the dirt on the grave. People are crying as they walk forward to drop handfuls of dirt on the lowered casket. Marcus is surprised to see Peter among those who now come forward. He had not seen Peter until this moment. People retreat and walk back to their cars. Father Jerry grabs Marcus by his arm as they head down to the stairs to the parking lot.

FATHER JERRY

I've done quite a few funerals now and people get up and talk, but I have never heard someone say something like that, without notes, spontaneously, that was so spiritually inspired. So real and heartfelt. You know what I mean? I think you have a gift.

MARCUS

Thank you.

FATHER JERRY

Maybe I wasn't paying much attention before in the hospital. I never even noticed that you have a Boston accent. I'm from the North End. Irish Catholic to the core.

MARCUS

I am from Hoboken.

FATHER JERRY

Yeah, but then you went to Harvard or Tufts.

STAGE MANAGER/SPALDING GRAY

Marcus doesn't correct the priest, nor does he mention that he appropriated *my* voice and *my* interpretation of the Stage Manager's speech from *Our Town* when I did it in 1988 on Broadway. Instead he looks into the eyes of the handsome priest with Ivy-League assurance. Father Jerry nods and looks directly back at Marcus with North-end awe.

Music Note: [Sound of Frank Sinatra singing:].....
Strangers in the night, exchanging glances. Wondering in
the night what were the chances we'd be sharing love before
the night was through? Something in your eyes....