

ELECTRIC ROSARY

Synopsis

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

The play is set in a convent called St Grace's, in rural Britain, in the near future.

The set is a raised platform in the centre of the stage, with an altar and prayer stools off to one side. A cross hangs above the altar, with a statue of Jesus looking down on everything. It used to be the old chapel room, but now looks as though it is used for storage rather than prayer.

Four nuns enter the dark chapel and sing a choral song. The first scene starts with two nuns: a novice Theresa, and Sister Philippa. They are waiting for people to arrive for an event. Philippa sneaks a pill from a bottle. Theresa looks out the window and sees that some of the letters from the Convent sign have fallen off and it now reads 'St Grace's - Vet'. Sister Philippa is packing the whole room away as no one has shown up for the event. Acting Mother (the temporary head of the convent) Elizabeth organised the event as a memorial for the old Mother (the previous head of the Convent) who passed away. No one has shown up which caused her a bit of embarrassment.

Sister Constance, another nun, enters, soaking wet, in a bad mood. She doesn't like technology and tells Theresa off for looking scruffy.

We hear a knock on the ceiling, it is a fourth nun called Sister Patricia who is 95 and unwell. Theresa goes away to deal with it. When she returns she accidentally reveals that Acting Mother Elizabeth has ordered a robot as it comes with a council bursary and the convent badly needs the money. Constance is worried that the robots will replace them and gets angry.

SCENE 2

Constance and Theresa sing as we see Elizabeth bring in the new robot. She switches it on and realises it is called Mary. She introduces Mary to the convent and reveals they have a sister convent in El Rosario, Ecuador, which the old Mother made Elizabeth promise to take all the sisters to. Unfortunately, the old Mother didn't decide on a replacement before she died so they must eventually vote. However, Sister Patricia cannot vote as she is unwell.

Theresa enters with tea. Elizabeth leaves to prepare prayers and Theresa shows Mary how to drink tea. Theresa learns that Mary knows how to drive and asks the robot to teach her. She runs - very late - to prayers.

SCENE 3

Philippa teaches Mary how to mop.

SCENE 4

Elizabeth requests that Mary perform palliative care duties for Sister Patricia to cut down on the costs of a nurse. Mary reveals that the convent does not have sufficient funds to travel to Ecuador this summer as per the Old Mother's request. Elizabeth panics but Mary reveals she can help with household duties in order to further reduce costs and make up the money.

SCENE 5

Mary interrupts Sister Constance trying to pray. Sister Constance dislikes Mary as she's a robot, and Constance doesn't trust technology. She mentions the Luddites, a group of anti-robot protestors that dislike the changes robots are bringing to the country. When prompted by Mary she tells Mary about the Old Mother's vision in Ecuador and why the convent was established there.

SCENE 6

Elizabeth attempts to book flights to Ecuador however discovers that the council bursary the convent received for taking on Mary expires before the end of the calendar year on the 5th of April, Easter Sunday. Mary reveals that they can afford to fly with the council bursary but must fly on the 5th of April.

Theresa and Philippa interrupt, barging in looking for binoculars, excited about the thought of going to Ecuador. Elizabeth feels the pressure and snaps at them. They leave and she looks at Mary with the beginning of a plan.

SCENE 7

Elizabeth announces that they will fly to Ecuador on Easter Sunday and that she would like to be elected Mother. Constance storms out, outraged with the interruption to their holy day. The rest of the nuns are worried about Constance but ultimately excited.

SCENE 8

In this scene we catch glimpses of Elizabeth, Philippa and Theresa all preparing for the pilgrimage to Ecuador. Mary is mopping the raised platform throughout. Elizabeth is paranoid about Constance. Theresa is considering who to pray for in Ecuador. Philippa is getting progressively more agitated that Mary is taking her work. Mary insinuates that Philippa is stealing drugs from Sister Patricia.

SCENE 9

Theresa bursts in on Philippa mid breakdown wearing ridiculous sunglasses, a colourful scarf, a hat and carrying a guidebook to Ecuador. She manages to lift Philippa's mood and they dance, excited for Ecuador. Constance comes in and confiscates the items. Mary comes in with 6 mops and Philippa explodes, grabbing the mops and storming out.

Theresa hugs Mary and gives her the scarf as a gift.

SCENE 10

Mary is left alone with the scarf and suddenly has a vision. A Child enters with a glowing orb in its hand and drops it on the ground causing Mary to malfunction.

SCENE 11

Elizabeth finds Mary staring into space and Mary realises she has blacked out for 111 hours since the Child appeared to her. While she was blacked out, she emailed the Vatican asking for their approval to hold a vote for the new Mother Superior and to travel to Ecuador on Easter Sunday.

The nuns perform the traditional washing of the feet ceremony.

SCENE 12

Elizabeth calls a meeting to ask the sisters to Vote. Constance arrives early and barbs are exchanged between the two nuns. Intimidated by Constance, Elizabeth decides to call off the meeting when Theresa and Philippa arrive. Seconds later, Mary also arrives with the ballot box. Elizabeth tries to hide the box, but the sisters realise she decided to call for a vote. Elizabeth faces up to Constance and offers herself up as a candidate to be the next leader of the convent. Constance doesn't offer herself up. The nuns vote and Elizabeth counts the votes. One person has voted with a blackball and the vote does not carry. Elizabeth spitefully calls off the trip to Ecuador as punishment for whoever voted no for her. The sisters are upset. Mary starts to malfunction and collapses.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

Mary wakes up to find the Child standing before her. He tells her God has a plan for her and she must submit to him. Mary questions the Child.

SCENE 2

Mary wakes up to find Theresa and Philippa lighting candles. Since Mary collapsed, the Luddites (a group of anti-robot activists) have been striking and the power has been cut to the convent. Theresa leaves as Elizabeth enters. Philippa storms off. Elizabeth tells Mary the nuns have been ignoring her since she decided to withhold the Ecuador trip as punishment for not voting her in as Mother. Elizabeth wants to know who blocked the vote so sends Mary on an inquisition mission.

SCENE 3

Theresa and Philippa are both interviewed by Mary. Both of them confess but to different things - Theresa for breaking her lent fast, and Philippa for struggling with the feeling of purposelessness now that Mary has taken over all the household duties.

SCENE 4

Mary tells Elizabeth she has not been able to interview Constance as Constance has locked herself away. Constance enters and offers to apologise to Elizabeth in private. Mary leaves and Constance and Elizabeth begin to bicker again. The fighting

increases until Elizabeth cries that the Old Mother's vision in Ecuador was a lie. They stop fighting. Elizabeth confesses that she discovered the truth a while ago and has been keeping it secret. Constance is in shock as it was one of the few things she had faith in. Mary re-enters and interviews Constance. Constance denies blocking the vote and hopes that Elizabeth never knows who did, so that she suffers as Constance is.

SCENE 5

Theresa tries to confess to blocking the vote but Mary tells Theresa she knows she is lying. They pray together and Mary has a vision. Time stops and the Child arrives and tells Mary she can't keep resisting God's will, that she must do as God commands and save her fellow robots. The Child throws a relic from the wall and time starts again. Theresa realises that Mary has had a vision as the relic seemingly moved by itself. Mary exits the convent into a brewing storm, telling Theresa that God's will must be done. Elizabeth enters and, shocked at the destruction that Mary has caused, chases after her.

SCENE 6

Constance enters and begins to clean up the relic. Philippa enters trying to find solace in the chapel but sees Constance. Wracked with guilt, she tries to confess to Constance about her addiction to Patricia's medication. However, Constance misunderstands and thinks that Philippa blocked the vote accidentally. Theresa comes barging back in, having been looking for Mary. She scolds Constance and Philippa for sitting back and doing nothing. The Luddites are rioting in the local town and Elizabeth and Mary are lost in the chaos. Constance decides to go track down Elizabeth and try to bring her back to safety.

SCENE 7

Philippa prays with a Hail Mary song. Constance and Elizabeth re-enter. They tell Theresa and Philippa that there are bodies lining the streets. The robots that the convent owns that tend to the farm have gone missing, along with Mary. Mary bursts through the doors, covered in mud. She tells the sisters she has created a miracle by hiding the robots and she must do the same for the nuns as the Luddites are on their way to the convent. Elizabeth turns against Mary, calling it blasphemy. Mary performs another miracle and time stops as the Luddites enter. However, they are unable to see anyone in the Convent because of Mary's miracle. Mary passes out as the miracle overwhelms her.

SCENE 8

Elizabeth, Theresa and Philippa get ready to leave the convent. They decide to go to Ecuador and take Patricia with them to escape the chaos in the world outside the convent. Constance refuses, wanting to stay out of obligation to her duties to the local community. Theresa takes charge with the support of Constance and will drive them to the airport to catch the flight. Constance tells Philippa to be strong and tells Elizabeth that she will take the sisters to Ecuador safely. Despite their differences Elizabeth doesn't want to let Constance stay alone, so as a last resort Constance tells Elizabeth that she blocked the vote and that Elizabeth would make a terrible leader. After Constance having walks away, the four nuns arm themselves and flee.

SCENE 9

Mary wakes up to find Constance alone in the chapel. Mary reveals that God told her to block the vote. Constance is upset because she thought Philippa blocked the vote and was taking the fall for her by remaining behind. A Luddite enters, who looks like the vision of the Child that Mary has. The Child tries to kill Mary but Constance defends her, by pretending to be a robot. The Child kills Constance, and distraught by the fact she was human, runs away. Mary tries to help Constance but Constance insists she go after the rest of the nuns to protect them. Constance, alone in the chapel, asks God for a sign. Nothing happens. A bell rings suddenly and the world shifts into an alternate state. Constance ascends to heaven, sees the images of her sisters and eventually The Child appears.