

Few Thy Voice

SYNOPSIS

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Illyria Swan was once a movie actress – radiant and beautiful – but now? Now she is a shell of her former self. Years after abandoning her father when she was young, she suffered a mental breakdown and now lives her days in perpetual guilt at her paternal abandonment. This guilt is tempered only by the love she can give to senile old men who have themselves been abandoned by the people they love - abandoned in an underfunded nursing home, managed by a shifty, con-artist proprietor, Richard Crenshaw. Illyria's husband, Fenno Masterson, a leader in finance, devoted to his wife and anxious to keep her from tumbling ever further into depression, is tasked with ensuring she always has an old man to love and tend. The most recent one of these, a mute Alzheimer's patient named Patrick O'Malley, is the father of a lucre-loving, sharp-tongued widow – Eloise Olympia Pambeck-O'Malley – who is glad to be rid of her burdensome father and his even more burdensome medical bills.

This time, however, an innocent attempt at “reverse adoption” – adoption of the old, not the young – turns sour when the allegedly mute Mr. O'Malley suddenly begins to speak to Illyria and reveals to her a family secret of murder... specifically, the murder of his wife by his daughter. Fenno and his all-around aide and assistant, a fallen police officer named August Jaysen, simply cannot believe that the old man actually speaks to Illyria – but Illyria is adamant that he does and quickly becomes protective of the old man's safety. Mr. O'Malley, alas, never speaks in front of anyone but Illyria - perhaps because he can't really speak at all, assuming his “speech” is nothing but the invention of Illyria's troubled mind.

...or perhaps not, for Eloise Pambeck-O'Malley appears rather nervous when she hears from Richard Crenshaw that her father is allegedly talking up a storm about “murder.” Meanwhile, Illyria can only descend further into hysterics, insisting that the murder referenced by the old man must be solved and the murderer punished. Fearing that this unsavory desire for justice may reveal a little too much – too much about Mrs. Pambeck-O'Malley's past and too much about Fenno Masterson procuring senile old men for his wife – Crenshaw and Mrs. Pambeck-O'Malley reach a decision: the old man must be silenced, before he says anything further... and, if necessary, Illyria must follow him.

Perhaps they get away with it, perhaps they don't – but, either way, nothing can free us from the eventual truth behind the old man's ranting and the secret that lies so pendulously in wait.