

M/W

PREJEAN

You're a real man now, Matthew.

MATT

I hated to say goodbye. I told them that if I get a chance I'll call 'em back right before I go.

There is a pause, Matt breaks down. He begins to sob.

PREJEAN

What is it, Matt?

MATT

My mother said, "it was that Vitello. I'll always regret that you got involved with him." And I didn't want her to think that. Something you said. You were right. I could have walked away. But I didn't. I let myself listen to him. I was a victim, a spineless shit. He was older, tough as nails, I was all boozed up trying to be as tough as him. I didn't have the courage to stand up to him. I told my mother I was a coward. I went along with him. I didn't stand up to him. My mother kept saying, "no, Matt, it wasn't you, it wasn't you."

He sobs. Prejean cries. Long beat.

PREJEAN

Matt, look me in the eyes.

He does.

PREJEAN (CONT'D)

Did you kill Walter LeClair?

MATT

Yes ma'am.

PREJEAN

Do you accept the responsibility for both of their deaths?

MATT

Yes ma'am.

A pause.

MATT (CONT'D)

Last night when they dimmed the lights on the tier I kneeled down by my

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

bunk and prayed for those kids. I never done that before. Nobody was supposed to get killed.

The silence is heavy.

PREJEAN

You know, Matt, despite your crime, despite the terrible pain you have caused, you are a human being and you have a dignity that no one can take from you. You are a son of God.

MATT

Ain't nobody never called me no son of God before.

(smiles)

I've been called a son-of-a you know what lots of times but never no son of God. I hope my death gives their parents some relief. I really do. Maybe my death will help them get some peace, I don't know.

PREJEAN

Your last words can be words either of hate or of love and maybe that's the best thing you can offer the LeClairs and the Percys, a wish for their peace.

A pause.

They can hear the front door opening and closing over and over. The witnesses and press are arriving.

MATT

Getting busy around here.

Prejean looks at her watch.

MATT (CONT'D)

Look at the time, it's flying.

His moment of weakness paused, he sits in the metal chair and calls to Beliveau for a cup of coffee. He pulls a cigarette from the pack in his shirt pocket and notices that there are just a few left.

MATT (CONT'D)

Ought to just about make it.

He shivers.

MATT (CONT'D)

It's cold in here.

The guard gets a blue denim shirt and puts it around Matt's shoulders.

MATT (CONT'D)

What happened to that song you were going to play me? You said you had a song.

PREJEAN

A hymn.

MATT

Yeah, that.

PREJEAN

They have rules forbidding music.

MATT

I've noticed.

PREJEAN

They won't let me play it for you.

MATT

So sing it. You know the words?

PREJEAN

Yes. I'm not much of a singer.

MATT

I don't care.

There is a pause and then Prejean begins singing "Amazing Grace" softly at first. Matt listens, at first amused and then gradually more and more moved.

PREJEAN

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me, I once
was lost, but now I'm found, was
blind but now I see.

As she finishes Matt has a tear in his eye.

MATT

Thank you. I have to make a
confession to you. When I first met
you I thought you'd be doin' nothin'
but preachin' repentance at me, but
after our first visit, I saw I could
just talk to you like a friend, and
I told my mother that I met this
real nice lady.