

BAPTISTE

"Pilot"

Written by Jenny Deiker

10/27/17

TEASER

EXT. LOUISIANA - BAYOU - MORNING

Spanish moss melts from bald cypresses in the sweaty, sickly-sweet soup of Louisiana air. Live oaks and palmettos line a wide, dead-calm river, dotted with fallen branches and blankets of algae.

The CHIRRUP of frogs and WHINE of cicadas carries through the stagnant, breathy morning.

Camera PANS to find a sturdy, wooden DOCK, connecting the water to a grassy bank. Minnesota businessman and foreigner to these parts, JONATHAN PARKS, 51, ambles toward the water, carrying a fishing rod.

He's followed at a distance by RICHARD DEVILLIERS, mid-50s, his clothes pressed and proper. Richard speaks with the soft, upper-class accent of someone from a very old, and very important Louisiana family.

RICHARD

I think you'll find the biggest catfish in Bayou Baptiste right here off our dock.

Jonathan stops and takes in the scenery.

JONATHAN

It's really beautiful here, Richard. You're a lucky man.

RICHARD

"Luck is a thing that comes in many forms. And who can recognize her?"

Jonathan looks at him quizzically.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Hemingway.

JONATHAN

Nothing like this in Wisconsin. I love the northern lakes, but this is... heavenly.

He slaps at a mosquito.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Bite-y... but heavenly.

RICHARD

We think so, too.

Jonathan moves to the end of the dock and begins baiting his hook. Richard stays behind him.

JONATHAN
Worms are okay?

RICHARD
Yessir. 'Cats like the simple bait.
Put on two or three if you want a
big one.

As they chat, Richard reaches into his pants pocket and pulls out a little BURLAP POUCH - similar to something a woman would store jewelry in. He loosens the drawstring.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Cast out as far as you can. Deeper
waters out there. More life
stirring on the bottom.

Jonathan throws his arm into the cast. ZZZIIPPP. A slim fishing line sails to the dark water beyond.

Richard pours out some of the sack's contents into his hand - a grainy white POWDER.

He sits on his heels and begins siphoning the powder through his fist to draw a large CIRCLE on the dock.

Jonathan turns and watches Richard. Bewildered.

JONATHAN
Whatcha doing there?

RICHARD
Voodoo ritual. For the union of
predator and prey.

JONATHAN
A real touch of Louisiana.

RICHARD
History runs deep here.

Jonathan goes back to his fishing. The two men stand in silence for a beat.

From behind them, on the bank's edge, a woman appears. MARIE, mid-50s. Richard's wife, wearing her Sunday best.

She shares a sad, knowing glance with her husband.

Richard takes a deep breath, leans down, and draws a SLASH across the powdered circle with his finger. He stands up, slowly, and looks to Jonathan.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Any bites?

JONATHAN
Not yet...

Richard positions himself BEHIND Jonathan.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
I have a sneaking suspicion it'll
be a wh --

THUD! Richard kicks Jonathan square in the back, toppling him into the water.

Marie looks on -- dispassionate, remote.

Jonathan emerges briefly to the surface, kicking and sputtering, choking on muddy water.

Hands in pockets, Richard watches for a split second before --

WHOOSH. Jonathan is sucked under the water. Quick as a wink. No sound, no stirring.

He's simply gone.

Richard pauses for a beat, blinking, un-surprised, then grabs Jonathan's fishing rod and turns back to Marie.

Their 29-year-old son, KEVIN, appears on the bank. He's dressed in the pressed khakis and boat shoes of a Southern one-percenter.

Kevin steps down to the dock and moves to the powder circle.

He uses a single foot to sweep the powder away.

KEVIN
We'll be late for mass.

Richard nods, and joins his family in silently leaving the water's edge.

END TEASER