

A BAYOU MYSTIC FILMS PRODUCTION

BOUDREAUX

THE 13TH SACRIFICE

Written & Directed by Antonio R. Ward Jr. • New Orleans, 1938

CASTING SIDES — SELF-TAPE

BEAUMONT ST. CLAIR

SUPPORTING — THE ARRANGED SUITOR • AGE: 20–28

THE CHARACTER

The son of a banking family — handsome, polished, educated into pleasant uselessness, and pointed at Scarlet Boudreaux like a signed contract. He is everything an arranged suitor should be, and he wants none of it: not the wedding, not the house, not the whole arrangement. There is a side of him his buyers would send right back to the store if they ever saw the receipt.

Beaumont is not a rival and not a cad. He talks to Scarlet like a fellow prisoner — warm, unguarded, with real affection and not one flicker of wanting — and the role lives in that specific, delicate distinction. The actor must charm the audience and break their heart a little in the same dinner scene, wearing a mask that slides on and off in single lines.

ABOUT THE SCENE

The engagement dinner. Two performances at once: the polished suitor for the table, and the honest prisoner for Scarlet alone. The line 'I'm told I'm meant to be charming, not honest' is the whole character — find the sadness under the polish. The reader plays SCARLET and CHARLES.

SELF-TAPE INSTRUCTIONS

- Slate: name, height, location, representation (if any), and the role you are reading for.
- Frame from the chest up, in good light, with a neutral background. Reader off-camera.
- Period voice welcome, but truth first — do not let the accent drive the scene.
- Two takes maximum. Label your file: LASTNAME_FIRSTNAME_BEAUMONT.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

BEAUMONT ST. CLAIR, early twenties, handsome, polished, educated into pleasant uselessness, sits beside Scarlet.

BEAUMONT

Your father tells me you play
Debussy.

SCARLET

My tutor tells me I attempt
Debussy.

BEAUMONT

Attempt is often more interesting
than mastery.

He means it kindly. That is almost the problem.

CHARLES

Beaumont's father and I are
building the new riverfront
together. The old cotton wharves
-- I bought them for pennies when
everything crashed in thirty-one.
Come spring, they'll be the finest
addresses in the South.

(a measured sip of wine)

His family's bank holds the money.
Our name holds the society. And
these days, Beaumont, neither one
is worth much without the other.

BEAUMONT

(dry, into his glass)

My father invests. I am mostly
asked to nod near the contracts
and marry where I'm pointed.

The line lands a half-second too true. A small silence.
Charles's eyes flick to Beaumont, then to Scarlet -- the
two halves of his deal, seated side by side.

SCARLET

(catching it -- the whole
arithmetic)

...And I'm the society. Is that
it, Father? I'm the family name,
being loaned out against their
bank.

CHARLES

(unruffled; almost gentle)

You are seventeen, and you
understand more of business than

half the men at my club. That is precisely why the match is a good one, Scarlet. I am not selling you. I am investing you. There is a difference, and one day you will be grateful I knew it.

Elise nearly chokes on her water. Across the table, Father notes his daughter's cold, correct smile and approves of its shape, if not yet its sincerity.

Later, in a quiet moment as the others talk banking, Scarlet catches Beaumont looking at nothing -- at the candle, at some middle distance a thousand miles from this table.

SCARLET

(quietly, just to him)

You look like a man being measured for a suit he didn't order.

Beaumont startles -- then, for the first time, looks at her like a person and not a merger.

BEAUMONT

(low, rueful)

Can I tell you something awful?
And you won't use it against me?

(off her nod)

I don't want any of this. The wedding, the house, the whole arrangement.

(a breath)

And it's nothing to do with you -- you might be the only interesting thing in this entire evening. It's that I'm not the man your father thinks he's buying. There's a whole side of me he'd send right back to the store, if he ever saw the receipt.

SCARLET

(a small, surprised laugh)

That might be the most honest thing anyone's said to me in this house.

BEAUMONT

(the polished mask sliding back on)

Enjoy it. Won't happen again. I'm told I'm meant to be charming, not honest. My family files those under the same word.

And here's the quiet thing between them that neither can name: it's easy. Too easy. Beaumont talks to her like a fellow prisoner -- warm, unguarded, with none of the weight a young man's attention usually carries. No heat. No pursuit. And Scarlet, who's spent her whole life looked at like a portrait or a price, notices the absence of something she can't place -- that the boy she's meant to marry looks at her with real affection and not one flicker of wanting.

She doesn't understand it. She only knows it makes him the safest person at the table -- and that safety and love are apparently going to be two different men.

BEAUMONT

(gently, as if reading the
edge of her thought)

We could do worse than each other.

I'd be kind to you. I'd never ask
you to be something you're not.

(a beat, something sad
under it)

I'd only ask the same back.

Whatever either of us turns out to
be.

He lifts his glass -- a small, sad toast between two people being arranged. Scarlet almost likes him. Neither will remember, later, that this was the truest thing either said all night.

We will.