

A BAYOU MYSTIC FILMS PRODUCTION

BOUDREAUX

THE 13TH SACRIFICE

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

CASTING SIDES — SELF-TAPE

CHARLES BOUDREAUX

PRINCIPAL — THE FATHER • AGE: 45–60

THE CHARACTER

The master of the Boudreaux estate. A man who bought half a riverfront for pennies during the crash and has never once had to rush toward anything in his life. Widowed young; buried the only person he ever chose for himself, and has governed his house — and his daughter — with cold precision ever since.

Charles is not a shouting villain. He never raises his voice; he lowers it, and that is worse. His cruelty arrives dressed as reason, and his love arrives dressed as a locked door. The role demands enormous stillness and control — a man who does not argue, but concludes. The most frightening thing he does in the film is reveal a crack of real feeling before it can widen.

ABOUT THE SCENE

In this scene, Charles enters his daughter's room without knocking to end her romance and announce her engagement — gently, precisely, and absolutely. Play the tenderness, not the menace; the menace will take care of itself. The reader plays SCARLET.

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_CHARLES.

INT. SCARLET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door opens without a knock. Only one man in this house does not knock.

Scarlet sits at her vanity, unpinning her hair. She does not turn. In the mirror, she watches her father cross the room behind her, unhurried, a man who has never once had to rush toward anything in his life.

He stops. He does not sit. He selects, from her vanity, a single loose pearl, and turns it in the lamplight while he speaks, as though the conversation is the smaller of the two objects in his hand.

CHARLES
(mild, almost kind)
You will not go to the carriage house again.

SCARLET
(carefully)
I don't know what you--

CHARLES
Scarlet.

Just the name. Set down softly, the way you set down something you do not wish to break yet.

CHARLES
I buried the only person I ever chose for myself. In the rain. On a morning very like the ones you have been spending in that courtyard.
(he sets the pearl down; precise)
Do not imagine I failed to recognize the disease. I have simply had it longer than you.

Scarlet turns on the bench. Faces him. In her stillness there is a held thing, straining.

SCARLET
(quiet, even)
His name is Pierre.

Father regards her. A long beat. When he answers, he does not raise his voice. He lowers it. That is worse.

CHARLES
His name.
(the faintest, coldest)

smile)

That is the part you believe matters. That is how I know how young you still are. The name is never the point, child. The name is the first thing the world takes from a woman who chooses wrong. I am trying to spare you the education.

SCARLET

You're not sparing me. You're staking me.

(a breath)

Like the roses along the west walk. Bind them before they bend, so no one mistakes the bending for their nature.

The line lands. It is his own. Weeks old, thrown back at him across the exact distance he taught her to keep. Something moves behind his eyes. A crack. He seals it before it can widen. That resealing is the most frightening thing he does.

CHARLES

(very softly)

Everything I have ever denied you...

(and for one word, it is naked)

...I denied you out of love.

SCARLET

Then love feels exactly like a locked door.

(she turns back to the mirror; done)

I'll try to remember the difference.

Silence. He does not argue. Men like Charles Boudreaux do not argue; they conclude. He crosses to the door. Stops there, his back to her, one hand on the frame.

CHARLES

You are forbidden the carriage house. You are forbidden the boy. You will be presented at the ball. You will accept Beaumont St. Clair, and you will smile while you do it, because that is what the women of this family have always been able to do.

(a beat; almost tender,

which is the horror of it)
This is not punishment, Scarlet.
It is the last protection I have
left to give. One day, God
willing, you will be old enough to
forgive me for it.

He leaves. The door closes without a sound. He does not
slam it. He has never slammed anything in his life.

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