

The Bayou
By
Matt Sanders

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OVER BLACK:

JOANNA (O.S.)
(Singing)
"Hush a bye, don't you cry, go to
sleep my little baby."

Fade in:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING.

A IV bag slowly drips. Joanna breathes deep.

JOANNA
(Singing)
"When you wake, you shall have, all
the pretty little horses."

A bulky, intrusive hospital bed sits in the middle of the room.

JOANNA, 42, skinny, sickly pale skin, lays in bed. JUDD, 14, carefully lays his head on her chest. She runs her fingers through his brown hair.

Judd snuffles, and wipes away a tear. Joanna "shushes" him, and smiles.

JOANNA
(whispers)
You've always loved that song.

Judd carefully wraps his hands around his ailing mother.

JUDD
Only when you sing it.

Joanna's eyelids grow heavy. She slowly drifts off into a sleep.

Judd notices, checks his watch, and lifts his head up. He gently kisses her head, and exits the room.

EXT. FRONT YARD - EVENING.

A large ancient cypress tree sits in the yard, covered in Irish moss. The long, grey, hairlike moss sway in the cool evening breeze. Judd paces impatiently.

SAM, 14, pedals up the dirt driveway, and stops next to Judd.

JUDD
Where've you been? It's almost
dark!

Sam notices Judd's red puffy eyes.

SAM
How is she?

Judd wipes his nose with his arm. He shakes his head.

Sam nods.

SAM
Then let's go.

Judd picks up his bike from the yard and the two boys peddle
down the driveway.

EXT. BACK ROADS - EVENING

The two boys zoom down the tiny dirt road, trying to beat
the setting sun. Locusts chirp and sing their summer song.

They ride to the end of the trail. Sam stops, checks his
watch, and looks over to Judd.

JUDD
It has to be tonight.

Sam sighs, and nods. The two ditch their bikes and trek on
foot, further into the swamp.

EXT. BAYOU - NIGHT.

The sound of sludgy rubber boots is all that can be heard,
followed by heavy breathing from both boys..

Lightning bugs, by the millions sparkle through the trees
like the stars themselves were within reaching distance. Sam
stops in awe.

SAM
(catching his breathe)
Have you ever seen so many of them
before?

Judd, determined, doesn't seem to notice and continues
ahead.

JUDD
How much closer?

A beat.

SAM
We should be there any minute.

EXT. BAYOU - LATER

The two boys still continue ahead. Judd grows impatient.

JUDD
Sam, where are we? we should've
been there by now?

Sam pulls out an old compass from his pocket and checks their direction.

SAM
(to himself)
Go to the end of the trail, then
head East about 2 miles....

Sam looks down to the red arrow on his compass, pointing West.

SAM
Shit! No, no!

Judd cautiously looks to Sam.

JUDD
Sam, what did you do?

Sam's voice shakes.

SAM
It's this damn compass! It showed
East earlier, I swear it did!

Judd's face grows red with fury.

JUDD
Dammit Sam! What have you done?!

He runs and tackles Sam to the ground, the two scuffle and roll around in the shallow water.

Suddenly, the creaking of an old screen door can be heard off screen, followed by MR. MORGAN's voice.

MR. MORGAN (O.S.)
Who's out there?

The two boys stop, and look up.

MR. MORGAN (O.S.)
I said, who's there dammit! I ain't
afraid to shoot.

A concerned Sam answers.

SAM
Please don't shoot, we're just
turned around!

MR. MORGAN (O.S.)
You sound like you tryin' to kill
each other!

He lets out a chuckle.

MR. MORGAN (O.S.)
Come on up here, let's get yall out
of that swamp.

INT. MORGAN'S CABIN - NIGHT.

Bottles of embalmed frogs, rabbits, and other small
creatures line the termite ridden shelves. Voodoo heads and
offering candles accompany.

Mr. Morgan, African American, late 80's, strong but warped
body, hunches over an old cane.

Once in the light, Mr Morgan's milky, hazed over eyes makes
it apparent he is blind.

MR. MORGAN
What kind of business y'all boys
have out here at night? This place
ain't the same when the sun goes
down, you know. The Devil's in
these woods.

Judd sighs.

JUDD
Well, it doesn't matter now.

Sam looks down embarrassed.

SAM
...Fifolet.

Mr Morgan freezes at Sam's words.

MR. MORGAN

What did you just say?

SAM

My brother said he was out here one night and saw it, the Fifolet. That beautiful glowing light, said it was the most beautiful thing he's ever seen. It spoke to him, he swears it.

Mr. Morgan shakes his head and sighs.

MR. MORGAN

You boys ain't got no idea what you messin with. Just mentioning that name around here..

Judd interjects.

JUDD

So it's real?

Mr Morgan raises his voice.

MR. MORGAN

Of course it's real!

JUDD

How can we find it?

MR. MORGAN

There ain't no "it" son, Fifolet are everywhere.. all throughout this bayou, and if you ain't careful, you gone' get yourself into a situation you don't want to be in. You see Fifolet, you run AWAY from it, not TO it.

Sam seems confused.

SAM

But my brother always said..

Mr Morgan, frustrated, cuts him off.

MR. MORGAN

Well your brother was wrong dammit! Fifolet are evil things. Leading you deep in the swamp, to M'su Diable himself.

A smile grows on Sam's face. He fidgets

SAM
We aren't afraid of no Devil! See,
we come prepared.

He reaches to the collar of his shirt and pulls out a tiny mirror trinket hanging around his neck.

SAM
..Devil can't cross no mirror.

Mr. Morgan "tisks" and shakes his head.

MR. MORGAN
Son, don't tempt the M'su. I've had
enough of this tonight. I'll get
you some flashlights and a map, but
it's time y'all leave.

Mr. Morgan gets up, and walks to the back room. Judd and Sam both sit in silence.

Just then, a lightning bug flies into the nearby window, and repeatedly taps the glass pane. Sam notices and walks over for a closer look.

Suddenly, a second light shows up. Then a third, fourth, and fifth.

Sam, mesmerized, smiles.

SAM
Judd look! The fireflies, they're
back!

Judd looks up from his lap and over to Sam.. he seems confused..

JUDD
What? What fireflies?

Sam, in a euphoric state, can't take his eyes of them..

SAM
The fireflies, right here, look!
there's thousands of them!

Judd grows louder.

JUDD
What fireflies?!

Sam runs to the front door.

SAM

How can you not see them?!

He flings the screen door open, and exits the cabin.

JUDD

Sam?!

Judd watches as Sam runs out into the pitch black swamp.

EXT. SWAMP: ACCORDING TO SAM - NIGHT

Millions of little lights dance about, and illuminate the swamp perfectly. They leave little trails similar to glowing stardust behind a meteor. Sam laughs and twirls around.

EXT. MR MORGANS PORCH - NIGHT.

Judd stands and nervously watches as he barely sees Sam twirl in and out of the dark swamp.

Suddenly, the locust's hum, and cricket's chirping fall completely silent. Sam, and the swamp sit eerily still.

Mr. Morgan appears behind Judd.

MR. MORGAN

I can save your Momma, boy.

Judd's face turns ghost-white. He spins around.

Mr. Morgan's once milked over eyes are now black, soulless voids. Judd's voice trembles.

JUDD

(whispers)

M'su Diable.

Mr. Morgan laughs. Judd grabs hold of his mirror trinket.

MR. MORGAN

I can save her. Take all her pain away, give you both the normal life you once held so dear. It can come back to you, son.

Mr. Morgan walks towards Judd.

Instantly, Judd jumps and holds his mirror necklace out in front of him.

JUDD
Stay Back!

Mr. Morgan stops, and smiles.

Judd nervously begins to walk backwards, down the porch.

JUDD
Sam? Come on, we're leaving!

Sam doesn't budge.

JUDD
Sam!!

Judd begins to panic. Mr. Morgan lowers his voice.

MR. MORGAN
(Singing)
"Hush a bye, don't you cry, go to
sleep my little baby."

Judd stops, and tears fill his eyes. Mr. Morgan calmly continues

MR. MORGAN
(Singing)
"when you wake, you shall have, all
the pretty little horses"

Judd wipes his eyes.

MR MORGAN
She won't last the night, son.

Judd's hands begin to shake. He breaks.

JUDD
What do I have to do?

Mr. Morgan smiles..

MR. MORGAN
The way I see it, a trade is only
as good as what your gettin. I
think a life for a life sounds
about right.

Judd's eyes grow wide.

JUDD
(To himself)
My life for hers.

Mr. Morgan shakes his head.

MR. MORGAN
Not your life...

He points out in the yard to the entranced Sam.

MR. MORGAN
His. Been trying to get to him for
months now, but that damn mirror
keeps me away. Won't keep you away
though.

Judd sighs helplessly.

MR. MORGAN
There's not much time, Judd. She's
in pain.

Mr. Morgan gestures over to an axe propped up on the porch railing.

Judd looks at the axe, closes his eyes, and takes a determined breath.

CUT TO BLACK