

SNAKES IN THE WATER

written by

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08/09/2019

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OVER BLACK

SOUND ON - Waking life. The stirrings of a southern morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. A DOCK - DAWN

Still and blue. It's early. Or late depending on how you see it. Either way, it will be daylight soon.

SOUND ON - footsteps approaching. Closer...Closer...Closer

A naked man and a naked woman - HIM & HER - rush into frame and begin stripping their clothes. Still too dark to get a good look at them.

He races ahead and dives in, oblivious that she doesn't follow.

SPLASH!

CUT TO:

THE WATER - disturbed.

FADE IN:

TITLE IN RED - SNAKES IN THE WATER

TITLE FADE OUT:

CUT TO:

THE DOCK'S EDGE - She takes a seat and dangles her feet above him while humming the THE HOKEY POKEY.

IN THE WATER - He swims towards the legs like a fish after a lure.

A beat.

He lunges for her foot but she pulls away as if to tease him. He splashes some water her way and swims around to the ladder on the side of the dock.

CUT TO:

BACK ON THE DOCK

CLOSE ON - HER - She lies onto her back. Things are calm.

Still waters run deep. She *knows* but doesn't say. Instead, she waits. She listens. She chooses. When she does speak, it's slow and measured, often through half-closed eyes. You might think she's talking in her sleep. Her favorite sound is silence.

CLOSE ON - HIM - He ascends the ladder and approaches her. He's got heavy feet, a southern drawl, and hasn't been to church in seven Sundays. A last-call Casanova without a degree. Played second string in high school and still wears the sweatshirts. Big and huggable. Hairy and boastful. Fills space. Sucks air. Makes you smile. Leaves footprints.

At the moment, he's dripping everywhere.

HIM

You not wanna get in?

HER

I don't want to.

HIM

Oh yeah?

HER

Don't.

He grabs her arms and pulls her to her feet for a wrestling match.

HIM

You wanna go hotshot??

HER

I'll kill you.

She means it, but he doesn't know that yet. This little banter continues until he suddenly lunges in for the scoop. As he hoists her over his shoulder, she lets out a **PIERCING SCREAM**.

His spine stiffens and he swiftly returns his catch to the ground.

She leaves frame and he follows.

HOLD ON - THE EMPTY FRAME - No people. Just trees and water, and maybe a porch light of a house on the other shore.

Their conversation continues OFF CAMERA.

HER

(OC)

Don't pick me up like that ever again.
It's not funny. Do you hear me?

HIM

(OC)

Okay! Sorry. I was just goofing off!

A beat.

HIM

(OC)

Truly. I apologize.

LONG FADE IN:

TWO SHOT - their rimmed silhouettes emerge from the darkness
and bring us into the conversation.

HER

I know.

HIM

Shake on it?

HER

Shake on it?

HIM

Yeah, that's the fair way. You shake
on it then it's gone.

HER

Whatever governor.

A beat.

HER

Are you mad that I screamed?

HIM

Of course not.

A beat.

HER

Do you think I woke up any kids.

HIM

Nah.

HER
Are you sure?

HIM
I mean maybe.

HER
Maybe?

HIM
Well yeah probably. You screamed real loud. I think you should apologize.

HER
What do you mean?

HIM
The kiddies. You woke them up.

HER
I only yelled because of you. You should apologize to them.

HIM
You're gonna get us busted. Hang on. I got this.

CUT TO:

WIDE ON - THE DOCK

It's lighter now. He walks towards the dock's edge and cups his hands around his mouth.

HIM
I'm sorry about all the yelling!

His voice booms across the water. She races into frame and leaps on his back to cover his mouth.

He stumbles around before they both collapse onto their backs. They laugh until breathless. It's nearly silent again.

She looks up at the sky - THE MOON.

HIM
Why didn't you jump in?

She shrugs but he still got it in his teeth.

HIM
Are you mad I did?

HER
No.

HIM
But you didn't get in. You said you
wanted to get in.

She shrugs again.

HER
I thought I did.

HIM
Did you change your mind?

HER
I guess.

HIM
When?

HER
When we were running.

HIM
Why?

HER
I was afraid.

HIM
Afraid of what?

HER
Afraid of snakes

A beat.

HIM
There aren't any snakes.

Nothing.

HIM
Did you hear me? There aren't any
snakes. I scared them all.

HER
It freaks me out, okay?

HIM
In what way?

HER
Just listen.

And he does. For a second.

HIM
If you thought there were snakes in
the water, how come you didn't stop me
from jumping in?

HER
Why would I stop you from something
you're not afraid of?

HIM
Because you think it's dangerous.

HER
Do you?

CLOSE ON - His face

SUDDENLY - SMACK - The mosquitoes are feasting on his neck.

HIM
It's late.

HER
Early.

HIM
Yeah, don't remind me. We should get
going soon.

She sits up.

HER
I want to stay.

SMACK. Another. They're not touching her.

HIM
These things are eatin' me alive. I'm
scared one of them's fixing to get my
nuts.

HER
Fine. Then let's jump in.

HIM
What? Now?

HER
Yeah. I want to jump in.

HIM
Ehh I don't know. Water's kind of cold now.

HER
I think it could be warmer in the water.

HIM
Yeah...I don't know. The moment's gone.

HER
How can that be?

The question takes him by surprise.

HIM
What?

HER
Well how can it be gone? We're still here. You know? Just a new moment, if you want it to be.

HIM
That moment. That moment is gone.

A beat.

HIM
I got work in a few hours.

He stands and walks away. She stays parked. He stops when he doesn't hear her footsteps and walks back to her

HIM
Killing me Ruthie. It's nice to meet you. Alright? You're a hell of a dart player. We had fun at the bar, but I gotta get going. Big day tomorrow.

HER
What do you do again?

HOLD ON - His blank face.

HER
You lied?

HIM
Yeah well...

HER
Why do we have to go?

HIM
Doesn't matter. I just don't want to
get in that water anymore.

He leaves frame. She stays. Hold for a beat until she leans
up and peers over the edge into...

THE WATER - Her reflection. Distorted. Rippling. Fluid.

She pulls back and turns to watch him dressing. His nakedness
disappearing.

A beat.

HER
Your dick is small.

CUT TO:

DOCK BENCH - THAT MOMENT

Her insult whips his head to attention. His face contorts
under the struggle to mount a comeback.

HIM
Yeah well you're dirty.

CUT TO:

HER - She erupts with laughter at his limp retort.

HIM - Crumbling. humiliated.

HIM
Under the right conditions..whatever..
I got a perfectly normal..dick.

When the laughter fades, she feels something. Maybe remorse. Maybe pity. She lifts herself to her feet and approaches him.

She leans in closely to him.

HER
(whispering)
What are the right conditions?

HIM
Huh?

She strips the shirt from his torso.

CUT TO:

WIDE ON - THE DOCK - ALMOST DAYLIGHT

She leads him by the hand to the edge. Her naked. Him in boxers. He looks like a little boy.

HER
One...
Two...
Three...

ON THE SPLASH.

CUT TO BLACK:

SOUND ON - Heavy breathing. Waves ripple.

FADE IN:

TITLE IN RED - SNAKES IN THE WATER

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

CREDITS