

VOODOO QUEEN

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PILOT EPISODE

"Mrs. Orleans"

TEASER

SUPER:

In order to understand how present-day New Orleans hangs in the balance between destruction or salvation, we must reflect on a single event that took place on a rainy night in 1821 at the house on 1140 Royal Street...

EXT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - **NEW ORLEANS PAST** - NIGHT

THE FRENCH QUARTER HOUSE stands three stories high beneath the pouring rain...

Wrought iron balconies wrap the walls that hold its secrets...

Arched windows stare out, voiceless to reveal all that they have witnessed...

On the street corner below, a ragged, soaked WHITE PROSTITUTE moves in the rain and shadows to beneath a lamp post, which reveals... her eyes are gouged out...

She holds her INFANT GIRL in her arms, a dark-skinned baby, wrapped in a shawl...

She kisses the baby, touches her pudgy cheek. The Infant Girl grips her mother's finger... lets go.

White Prostitute feels her way, lays the bundled infant down at the lamp post, then disappears into the night.

The Infant Girl doesn't cry, but rather giggles, her cat-like eyes wide open, despite the rain.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER STREET - NIGHT

A HOODED CARRIAGE whisks down the dark muddy cobblestone. A COACHMAN, in raincoat and hat, CRACKS THE REINS from atop the carriage bench.

INT. HOODED CARRIAGE - NIGHT

By light of the passing street lamps, shrouded in the darkness of the backseat, we meet DELPHINE LALAUURIE, a contrast between pale and dark, alabaster and onyx, ice and coal...

DELPHINE

I am a devote Christian, Ms. Laveau.
To seek help from one of your faith
is considered a sin. Our transaction
must never be spoken of.

She digs out a FOLD OF MONEY from her small purse, offers it to...

MARIE LAVEAU who sits across from her. She's a classic Creole - a vibrant mix of African, European and Native American blood - as colorful as the tignon that wraps her regal head.

Marie has a symmetry of figure, a dignity of bones...

MARIE LAVEAU

I ask no payment, Madame Delphine.

Delphine returns the money to her purse.

DELPHINE

Let us pray then... my sin does not
return to haunt us.

MARIE LAVEAU

De only sin dat haunt us, Madame
Delphine, is de one we keep secret.

EXT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - NIGHT

A house slave hefts OPEN THE GRAND CAST IRON GATE. The CARRIAGE ROLLS THROUGH and disappears down the lamp lit drive.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL - 3RD FLOOR ROOM - NIGHT

A single ARCHED WINDOW runs with rain. There's an EMPTY WHEELCHAIR at the base of a DROP-DOWN STAIRCASE leading up into the attic.

Delphine leads the way...

DELPHINE

On these cold nights, the attic is
the warmest room in the house for
Camille.

Marie and the Coachman follow Delphine up the attic stairs.

INT. ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT

Five year old CAMILLE LALAUURIE lays in bed, gaunt and
feverish beneath blankets. Delphine leans over her, pets her
head...

DELPHINE

Darling, this is Marie Laveau. She
is here to help you get better.

Marie digs into her sack, lights FOUR BLACK CANDLES, places
them at the posts of the bed.

Marie moves bedside to Camille, hovers over her, waves an
open hand back and forth before the little girl's frightened
stare as she SPEAKS AN INCANTATION.

Delphine steps uneasily back to where the Coachman stands.
She grips the CRUCIFIX hanging around her neck.

Marie presses her fingertips into Camille's fevered brow.

Camille's EYES ROLL WHITE, her body goes limp.

DELPHINE

What is happening?

Marie pays no attention but to the task at hand. She digs a
SMALL JAR from her sack.

COACHMAN

Madame Delphine, may be best we let
Lady Laveau alone, do her reckoning.

DELPHINE

Hush! I will not leave this room.

From the SMALL JAR Marie takes a stem of CHILI PEPPER which
she douses with her own saliva, then places it under the
tongue of Camille.

From ANOTHER JAR, Marie shakes TWO TINY SWAMP SNAKES out into
her palm. They are dead, but freshly so. She rolls them into
spirals and places them over Camille's OPENED WHITE EYES.

DELPHINE
 (under her breath)
 Dear Holy Savior, I have made a
 grave mistake.

Marie, in a trance all her own, lowers over the girl,
 whispers into her ears...

Camille immediately begins to SHUDDER - CONVULSE - THRASH
 wildly beneath the covers -

DELPHINE
 Enough! That is enough! Stop!

Delphine pushes Marie aside - plucks the snakes from
 Camille's eyes - fingers the pepper out of her mouth.

MARIE LAVEAU
 (coming out of trance)
 Wait, it dis begun...

Delphine turns to the Coachman...

DELPHINE
 Remove her from this house!
 Immediately! I want her gone!

The Coachman grabs Marie's sack - grips her arm -

COACHMAN
 Lady Laveau, come, we must leave.
 I'll ride you back to St. Ann
 Street.

MARIE LAVEAU
 It dis begun... et mus' not stop...
 dis chil' be left to suffer.

Delphine turns with pointed finger...

DELPHINE
 No, you witch! You will suffer!

The Coachman ushers Marie out, leaves Delphine to hold her
 daughter, rocking her, soothing her to calm.

EXT. THE CORNER OF ROYAL STREET - NIGHT

The HOUSE ON ROYAL looms in the background... the LAMP POST
 in the rain... the Infant Girl wiggles beneath the soaked
 blanket, speaking gibberish...

We hear the sound of SNORTING HORSES approach, the CREAKING OF A CARRIAGE...

The Coachman picks up the Infant Girl from beneath the lamp post, cradles the baby to the carriage window...

COACHMAN

Wide-eyed baby girl, Lady Laveau.

Marie's voice from inside the carriage -

MARIE LAVEAU

Tis a chil' of God.

Carriage door opens, MARIE'S HANDS reach out for the baby.

INT. HOODED CARRIAGE (MOVING) - NIGHT

Marie swaddles the Infant Girl in her arms, whispers into her ear...

MARIE LAVEAU

Tonight de rain come, Chil'... ta
wash de sins of de momma away.

She stares down on the Infant Girl, groping, gurgling.

MARIE LAVEAU

Is it you, de one dat is told of,
'ave nine lives like de cat?

Marie unlaces the neckline of her dress...

MARIE LAVEAU

Cat'rine... dat is de name.

She allows the Infant Girl to suckle from her swollen breast.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. JUMBO JET (FLYING) - **PRESENT** - DAY

The woman in seat 8A is startled awake from her dream.

She peels off her eye shades to reveal her mahogany skin...
wipes the drool from her chin... looks around, disoriented...

Her name is KAT LAGRINE. She tucks an unruly coil of her
raven hair beneath her Oakland Raiders visor.

She gropes beneath her seat and pulls up her handbag. Digs
through it, finds a SMALL VIAL, dumps two PINK OVAL PILLS
into her palm.

The voice of a child off-screen -

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
What are those for?

Kat turns to see a curious little black girl (EVE) standing
in the aisle. She observes the girl's bony, scarred knees...
her frilly pink dress... the ribbons in her hair... the style
of a bygone era.

Kat considers the pills in her hand...

KAT
This is my medicine.

EVE
Are you sick?

KAT
Well... it's not that I'm sick...
they just... make me better.

EVE
Better than what?

KAT
Hmm... that's a good question... I'm
not really sure.

EVE
I wouldn't eat them, then.

The PILOT'S VOICE, like a smooth jazz deejay, comes over the
intercom, announces their descent to "*Louis Armstrong
International Airport; 88 degrees and humid; light rain.
Welcome to N'awlins.*"

KAT

I guess you better get to your seat.
Are your parents on the plane?

EVE

No. Just you. Gran'mama says you're
the one who's gonna help me.

KAT

Help you with what?

EVE

Help keep me safe from Madame
Delphine. But you can't eat those
pink medicines anymore.

A STEWARDESS approaches, blocking Kat's view of the little
girl -

STEWARDESS

(to Kat)

Ma'am, can you please raise your
seat back and fasten your belt.

When the Stewardess moves on, the little girl is gone.

Kat cranes, looking up and down the aisle...

She looks hard at the TWO PINK PILLS in her palm...

Dumps them back into the vial.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

In the crowd of people awaiting arrivals, MYLES LAGRINE
stands out.

It's more than just the big bouquet of flowers he holds...
this guy just oozes style.

Designer jeans outline his lean silhouette, a fitted white
dress shirt contrasts his flawless ebony skin and a big ivory
smile bursts forth from his sculpted face. He is perfect.

He anxiously eyes the last trickle of disembarking
passengers, until he sees Kat with her roller bag, last to
emerge from the jet bridge.

Myles moves to Kat, embracing her with a hug and kiss.

MYLES

God, I've missed you, babe.

Myles presents Kat the bouquet of white Calla Lilly.

MYLES

These are blooming all over the city
right now... always reminding me of
you.

Kat, distracted, fails to acknowledge the flowers, her eyes
darting around the terminal...

MYLES

Hello? Kat?

KAT

Myles, did you see a little girl get
off the plane, in a pink dress?

MYLES

No, I don't think so.

Kat sees the Stewardess seal the doors to the jet bridge.

MYLES

Come on, let's get outta here. I
can't wait for you to see the
house... were doing up some crawfish
tonight.

KAT

I just... I wanna make sure she's
okay. She was all alone.

Kat flags down the passing Stewardess from the plane...

KAT

Excuse me. Did the little girl make
it off the plane? The one travelling
alone?

STEWARDESS

There were no minors travelling
alone on the flight.

KAT

Are you sure? I saw her. I talked to
her.

STEWARDESS

I'm quite sure, ma'am.

Stewardess offers Kat a polite smile before she moves on with
roller bag in tow.

MYLES

Babe... have you been taking your
meds?

Kat cradles the flowers from Myles' hold.

KAT

These are beautiful... take me home.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

A TAXI snakes its way through the streets of historic New Orleans. The sidewalks jammed with TOURISTS... old time HORSE CARRIAGES... N.O.P.D. PATROL CARS in every direction.

INT. TAXI (DRIVING) - DAY

Kat gazes out at BAR after BAR after BAR, a RESTAURANT here, a VOODOO SHOP there, and everybody with a drink in their hand.

KAT

Is this place always just one big party?

MYLES

It is on St. John's Eve. Bit of a local holiday you might say. Night the Voodoo Queen supposed to come back... if you believe that shit.

Kat nods, stares out at -

- A GAUNT BLACK CAT arched atop a balcony rail
- A NAKED WOMAN AND MAN pull the drapes of a window closed
- A TEENAGE GIRL wisps the sidewalk in a soiled nightgown

KAT

(under her breath)
Ghostly.

OLD CABBIE looks at Kat through the REAR-VIEW MIRROR -

OLD CABBIE

Ghost on every corner, Missus, you
look hard enough.

Kat catches his mischievous glance in the mirror. She turns her eyes back out to the passing streets, her heart leaps in her chest as she sees -

The little girl - alone on a corner - frilly pink dress - an anachronism... she gives Kat a little wave.

Kat reaches for Myles' strong hand - grips it tightly.

EXT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - DAY

An endless PARADE PROCESSION throbs down the street. A mob of HALF-NAKED PEOPLE dance wildly, BANG ON DRUMS, fiery TORCHES RAISED.

ACROSS THE STREET

Myles and Kat exit the cab. He has her roller bag. She has the flowers. They look out on the THRONG OF PARADERS... like crossing the Red Sea...

MYLES

Stay with me, babe.

He takes her hand, leads the way...

INTO THE PARADE

Kat grips Myles' hand tightly, until -

The head of a live ALBINO PYTHON meets Kat face-to-face - its darting tongue nearly flitting her nose - Kat reels -

She loses Myles - gets turned around in the throng -

The paraders CHANT in unison to the cacophony of DRUMS and RATTLING GOURDS -

Kat, discombobulated, searches for Myles -

KAT

Myles!

A withered OLD BLIND WOMAN bumps into Kat - feels Kat's feet with her walking stick - caresses Kat's arm with her bony-knuckled hand - touches Kat's face with her pruned fingers...

OLD BLIND WOMAN

*Ago! Ago! Mamba Gran come! Dance
Calinda! Dance!*

Beyond the Old Blind Woman, Kat glimpses the little girl in the pink dress laying in a pool of blood on the cobblestone street.

Kat drops the flowers -

A BIG STRONG HAND grips her - Myles -

MYLES

Kat! Come on!

He pulls her through -

ONTO THE SIDEWALK

Safe from the parade, Kat searches for the sight of the little girl... sees nothing but the BOUQUET OF WHITE CALLA LILLY left trampled.

EXT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - COURTYARD - DAY

Lush vines, colorful flora, and the old slave quarters surround the circular drive. A fertile PEACH TREE holds center court.

Myles, presenting proudly -

MYLES

Can you believe it... this is ours.

Kat takes in the grandeur of the old Creole mansion... its sturdy brick bones... its sweeping wrought iron balconies... its rows of arched French windows.

KAT

Myles... it's beautiful... more than I imagined.

Movers manhandle a BABY GRAND PIANO, bang it into the house through French doors.

MYLES

Guys! You know that's not a refrigerator, right?!

Myles trots off to orchestrate the piano move.

Kat turns her gaze to the peach tree, ripe with fruit.

On tip-toe, she tries to pluck a PERFECT PEACH... but it is just out of reach...

Until a BIG WEATHERED HAND reaches from behind her - plucks the peach - startling Kat to a frightened yelp.

Kat spins around to meet -

BEAUMONT, an octogenarian with cataract eyes and a massive scar from eye to chin.

BEAUMONT

'Bout as ripe as can be right now.

He pulls a knife from his pocket, flicks it open...

KAT

Who are you?

BEAUMONT

Name's *Beaumont*. I'm the caretaker
'round here. Pleasure to finally
meet you, Madam Lagraine.

KAT

You can just call me *Kat*.

BEAUMONT

If it's fine by you, Madam *Kat*.

Beaumont works his knife, nimbly cuts the peach, flowering
the slices in his palm, offering to Kat.

She takes a slice... bites into it... juice dribbles down her
chin...

KAT

You're right... ripe as can be.

BEAUMONT

I'll see to your luggage, Madam *Kat*.
Why don't you go on inside... get
acquainted with your new home.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - DINING ROOM - DAY

Kat enters through the French doors. Faded silk wallpaper
wraps the space around an opulent walnut dining table fit for
a party.

MAHOGANY DOORS

carved with flowers and angelic faces lead Kat...

INT. FOYER - DAY

Marble flooring... wainscoted walls... motionless curtains...

Myles and the movers are stuck trying to get the piano into
the parlor... blocking further exploration of the first
floor.

Kat approaches A STAIRCASE leading to the upper levels. Kat climbs

THE SERPENTINE STAIRCASE

taking it all in, step by step, running her hand along the artisan wood-work railing.

INT. 2ND FLOOR BILLIARD ROOM - DAY

A beat up old snooker table... a stone fireplace... floor planks of polished cypress.. sconces that burned bright a hundred years ago...

Kat continues up the stairs to...

INT. 3RD FLOOR LANDING - DAY

She pushes open double doors to see...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

It's immense. A fireplace. A new king-size bed. Myles has been sleeping on the mattress with just a blanket.

Kat searches through the boxes, unearths some bedding. She stands perfectly still for a moment...

There's a MUFFLED SOUND from the ceiling... a RATTLE AND DRAG... like chains...

INT. 3RD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Kat follows the RATTLING SOUND GROWING LOUDER down the hall...

INT. 3RD FLOOR MIDDLE ROOM - DAY

Kat pushes open the door. Dark. She finds the light switch. A CEILING BULB FLICKERS on dimly to reveal the empty room.

Kat steps in.

The single ARCHED WINDOW IS BOARDED SHUT. Above it hangs A CLOTH DOLL depicting a little black child with arms outstretched.

Sound of RATTLE AND DRAG, directly above, has Kat gazing up at the ceiling...

A resounding BOOM startles!

It's the piano down below. Kat hurries out of the room, pulls the door shut behind her.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - NIGHT

ROVING SHOT through the house, lit up to reveal its evening grandeur. SMOKY JAZZ MUSIC plays in the background. We hear KAT'S VOICE as we float, ghost-like...

KAT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Why is the window in that upstairs
room boarded, Beaumont?

We join Kat and Beaumont...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kat peels carrots over the kitchen sink.

Beaumont rips the yellow body sacs from a jumbo crawfish over newspaper covering the counter...

BEAUMONT
That window's been boarded up for as
far back as I can remember.

KAT
There's a doll over that window.
Like the one here, over the sink.
What are they?

Kat looks at a KITCHEN DOLL, staring out at her with button eyes.

BEAUMONT
Well, Madam Kat, those are for
wardin' off bad spirits.

Spooked, Kat flips the doll to face away.

Beaumont slyly pulls a TINY BAG from his apron pocket, sprinkles a MYSTERIOUS POWDER over the fresh crab meat.

Myles enters from the dining room - a bottle of wine tucked under his arm - two wine glasses dangling between his fingers...

MYLES
Babe, c'mon. It's Beaumont's
kitchen, let him do his thing.

KAT
It's our kitchen, isn't it?

Beaumont, uncomfortable, scrunches up the goop-and-guts
drenched newspaper on the counter, exits the kitchen and out
the French doors.

Myles moves up behind Kat, kisses her neck...

MYLES
C'mon, Kat. It's our first night
together in the house. Let's relax,
have some wine, celebrate.

Kat turns to Myles, letting him press his body up against
hers. She returns his kisses...

KAT
You right, baby... I hope I didn't
hurt his feelings. Let me just clean
up this mess.

MYLES
I'm gonna get this wine open... let
it breath.

Myles playfully jazz dances off into the dining room.

Kat pivots back to the sink, gathers the carrot peels, turns
on the faucet. It's now she sees...

The KITCHEN DOLL has mysteriously turned back around... its
button eyes staring back out at her.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. 9TH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Blue FEMA tarps litter the horizon. A wall of row houses shows the high water line and spray-painted "X's"...

A school bus thuds over a neglected pothole with a muddy splash.

INT. DOAKES HOUSE - MORNING

A two bedroom shotgun style home...

A BOOM BOX SOUNDS the local news through intermittent static...

A POT OF OATMEAL bubbles on the stove...

INT. RAYRAY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

An oscillating fan moves the heavy morning air...

CRAYON DRAWINGS on lined notebook paper flap in the fan's rhythm, taped to the wall... depicting dark, horrific and often vulgar images of

- CREEPING SPIDERS
- PYTHON SNAKES
- PENISES AND VAGINAS

A bed-cover emblazoned with the *New Orleans Saints* logo is crumpled at the foot of the bed...

RAYRAY DOAKES, just a boy, lies motionless in his tighty whiteys atop the mattress, his ribs poking against his skin, his heavy, yellowed eyes stare dully at the ceiling.

RAY DOAKES SR. - wanting to get a move on - steps into the doorway and claps his big fleshy hands -

RAY SR.

C'mon boy... oatmeal's bubblin'.
Time to get up. I'm not gonna tell
you again, son.

Ray's jovial physique is big enough to fill the door frame.

His size 13 work boot taps the floor impatiently. He eyes the young boy with concern.

RayRay, anemic, struggles to lift himself from the bed. He looks at the GLASS OF ORANGE JUICE and a small BAGGY OF POWDER on the night stand.

RAY SR.

You know the routine... gotta take that on an empty stomach... that ain't just gris-gris, boy.

RayRay fingers up the powder bag, sprinkles it into the glass of juice and takes the biggest gulp he can muster.

RAY SR.

'Atta boy.

RayRay gets out of bed, stands for a moment as if gaining balance.

RAY SR.

You miss another day of school, you gonna end up repeatin' 3rd grade.

RayRay winces from the juice... his emaciated frame shudders... he vomits on the floor.

His father steps in, looks down at the vomit... sees evidence of bile and blood. Masking his concern, Ray pulls his son into his embrace...

RAY SR.

Don't worry, son... ain't nothin' but a thing.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER STREET - MORNING

The cobblestone is strewn with the debris of yesterday's parade. CUPS and BOTTLES and a RANDOM BOOT...

And it's that boot that MONSIGNOR BERNARD comes across while picking up the trash with his nabber...

In his designer jogging suit and Chuck Taylor sneakers, you might think he's a fitness instructor, but he's not... he's a priest.

He startles as he picks up the abandoned boot to see a SWAMP SNAKE slither out. Without hesitation, he crushes the head of the reptile under his heel.

We hear the music of U2's *Beautiful Day* in a muffled chime... it's his cell phone ringing... which he pulls from his pocket, checks the screen...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
(into phone)
Good Morning, Sister Mary Dupuis.

We hear Sister Mary's voice over the phone...

SISTER MARY'S VOICE
Sorry to bother you, Monsignor. But I just received an urgent phone call from Mrs. Babineaux. There's a problem with their son, Jimmy -

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
Yeah, I know the Babineaux boy.

SISTER MARY'S VOICE
Mrs. Babineaux says he's crawling around the house like a wolf.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
A wolf? How's that?

SISTER MARY'S VOICE
He's howling.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
I see.

SISTER MARY'S VOICE
She's got it in her mind they need an exorcism.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
An exorcism? Are we certain of the need? It is the day after St. John's... and a full moon.

SISTER MARY'S VOICE
He also bit his mother.

Monsignor Bernard hesitates...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
Okay then... tell them I'll be on my way.

EXT. BOURBON STREET - DAY

An empty club THUMPS TECHNO MUSIC...

The CLICKETY-CLACK of a policeman's horse stops on a dime to relieve its bowels...

A CALICO CAT with its head in a discarded cup, laps up warm beer...

EXT. ZOZO'S VODOO SHOPPE - DAY

French window panes painted in garish red, black and green... shutter doors open to the street... a sign hanging above the entrance reads: "WARNING! PROPERTY PROTECTED BY VODOO!"

INT. ZOZO'S VODOO SHOPPE - DAY

COLORFUL CANDLES everywhere...

A WALL OF GLASS JARS hold a prescription for any ailment...

VODOO DOLLS hang from the ceiling...

INT. VODOO SHOPPE BACKROOM - DAY

GERTRUDE - the withered old blind woman from the parade - concocts a paste of powders with mortar and pestle.

She reaches into a WHISKEY BARREL and pulls out a SWAMP SNAKE pinched at the neck...

The snake slithers and fights - escapes to the wood plank floor...

Gertrude grabs her WALKING STICK from where it leans against the wall...

She steps center room and listens...

With a single poke of the stick - CLACK! - she has the head of the snake beneath its tip -

She plucks the reptile from the floor...

Drains its venom into the mortar paste...

Drops the snake alive back into the whiskey barrel...

GERTRUDE

Ago... ago... Mamba Gran come...

With arthritic knuckles, Gertrude scoops the paste from the mortar bowl and gums it into her mouth...

She slowly sits down in her rocker... shudders from the poison coursing through her body...

GERTRUDE
You *silly* godhead...

She lifts her blind eyes to the heavens...

GERTRUDE
Take me if you dare... for what
don't kill me now... jus' make me
stronger.

She closes her eyes and begins to rock back and forth.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. CLAIRE CARLYLE, a seasoned psychiatrist, sits in an Eames chair with legs crossed, her blonde hair pulled back, sharp features...

DR. CARLYLE
Is there a reason you neglected to
answer the questions on the DES,
regarding your multiples?

Kat sits on a couch angled across.

KAT
I've done the scales before. Look, I
know Myles wants me to be here, and
I'm open to it.

DR. CARLYLE
So how long have you been taking
Risperdal?

KAT
Here's the deal - first they had me
on Mellaril... kept me up for days
at a time. Then they gave me
Haldol... made me wanna crawl out of
my skin. Risperdal?... I stopped
taking them all.

DR. CARLYLE
So Risperdal didn't work for you?

KAT
It works for Myles. Me? Not so much.

DR. CARLYLE
How is your relationship with Myles?

Kat twists her finger around the tassel of the couch pillow in her lap...

KAT

He wants to have a baby.

DR. CARLYLE

Do you want to have children?

KAT

I don't think I'm meant to be a mother.

DR. CARLYLE

Why so?

KAT

Well... I'm not taking the Risperdal.

DR. CARLYLE

What's been happening since you've stopped taking the medication?

KAT

I feel alive.

DR. CARLYLE

So the medication makes you feel... *dead*?

KAT

It makes me feel like I'm missing out... on... certain experiences.

DR. CARLYLE

Experiences. Like the personality states you've developed?

KAT

Yes... that would be fair to say.

DR. CARLYLE

How about the little girl you encountered at the airport?

Kat unwittingly breaks the tassel from the couch pillow...

KAT

Oh... did Myles tell you about her?

Dr. Carlyle reaches out, gestures to Kat to place the broken tassel in her palm...

DR. CARLYLE
Only out of concern.

Kat, embarrassed, places the tassel in Dr. Carlyle's hand...

KAT
Sorry... the little girl... she said
she needed my help.

DR. CARLYLE
Let's focus on getting you help
first. Would you consider trying a
different medication than the
others? Something new?

KAT
I'm done being dead.

DR. CARLYLE
Okay... fair enough.

Dr. Carlyle drops the tassel into a waste basket.

EXT. 9TH WARD FREE CLINIC - DAY

The waiting room is packed with the neighborhood's poorest -
mainly seniors and children.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

RayRay Doakes sits on the exam table. His father, Ray Sr.,
stands beside him.

Myles holds a syringe.

RAY SR.
Doc... I don't want no needles.
Ain't there some kinda pill you can
give him?

MYLES
Mr. Doakes, your boy has symptoms of
anemia. I need to draw some blood,
get it tested, see if we can find
out what's going on with him.

Kat closes the exam room door, observing.

Myles steps to RayRay, feels the boy's arm for a vein...
looks to Mr. Doakes, who finally nods.

Kat watches RayRay begin to hyperventilate as Myles TIES OFF HIS ARM...

MYLES

Okay, RayRay, this might sting a little bit.

Kat steps to the boy.

KAT

RayRay, my name is Kat.

RAY SR.

Who's this lady, Doc?

KAT

I'm Doctor Legraine's wife. If I can guess, RayRay, you're in... the third grade?

RAYRAY

'Cept I might be holded back for a year 'cause of bein' sick.

KAT

Besides your daddy, RayRay... who is your biggest hero of all time?

RAYRAY

Incredible Hulk.

KAT

Okay. Now close your eyes, and pretend you are him... *Incredible Hulk*. Can you imagine?

RayRay, eyes closed, nods...

RAYRAY

I'm green!

KAT

Good. Now, what's the scariest thing you can think of in the whole wide world?

RAYRAY

Spiders.

KAT

Spiders. Now, imagine the *scariest* spider you can think of.

Kat gently PEELS HIS GRIP from the cold steel table...

Myles DABS RAYRAY'S FOREARM with a COTTON SWAB.

KAT

Now imagine that spider is right here...

(she opens his fist)

... right here in the palm of Incredible Hulk's giant green hand.

RAYRAY

I wanna crush it, 'fore it bites me!

KAT

I know you do, but look how tiny it is in your big green hand. I'll bet she's more scared of you than you are of her.

RAYRAY

It's... scared of me?

KAT

Yes. She's afraid you're going to close your hand, and she'll never get to go home again.

RayRay holds the imaginary spider in his open palm... finally lowers the invisible insect to the exam table...

RAYRAY

Then go on home now.

Myles ever-so-gently STICKS THE NEEDLE INTO A BULGING VEIN, draws the BRIGHT RED BLOOD. He slips the needle free, unties the rubber strap.

RayRay opens his eyes to see Myles place a band-aid on his arm.

KAT

Sometimes the things we're most afraid of, turn out to be not so scary after all.

RayRay looks to Kat, stunned to believe it's all over. Turns to Myles...

RAYRAY

Can I see my blood?

Myles, caught off guard, considers...

MYLES

Don't see why not... it is your
blood.

He hands the boy the vial, which RayRay grips, feeling its
warmth...

RAYRAY

Wow... my blood...
(offers the vial to his
father)
... it's hot.

Ray Sr. refuses...

RAY SR.

Let's leave that with the doc,
son... see what comes of it.

Kat takes RayRay by the hand...

KAT

Now, let's talk to your daddy about
getting you caught up in school.

She looks to Ray Sr., who clearly likes Kat's effect.

EXT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - COURTYARD - DAY

A RIPE PEACH falls from the tree, its SKIN SPLITS OPEN as it
hits the ground.

INT. OLD SLAVE QUARTER - DAY

There's a brand new CHALKBOARD secured to the wall. A
TEACHER'S TABLE. Antique SCHOOL DESK.

BEAUMONT

Doc Lagraine said you're a
teacher... asked me to make a space
for you... hope it's to your liking.

Kat paces the room, takes it in...

KAT

It's perfect. Thank you. But let me
ask...

She points out THREE TINY DOLLS - depicting children -
hanging above the door frame.

KAT

Are those for bad spirits, too?

BEAUMONT

Well, Madam Kat, this was the quarters for the slave children.

KAT

There are no slave children any more. Can you please take them down?

BEAUMONT

Just because this house be Black-owned now, don't mean the spirits of the past don't exist.

KAT

I prefer them taken down.

Beaumont lumbers over a step ladder, sets it before the door, climbs up. One by one he removes the three dolls from their nail-heads -

FLOOR PLANK CRACKS BENEATH THE LADDER -

Beaumont steadies himself and climbs down - clutching the dolls.

He inspects the broken floorboard...

BEAUMONT

I'll see to it that gets fixed.

Kat, seeing the break...

KAT

Thank you, Beaumont.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - BIRD'S EYE VIEW - DAY

We rise up from the HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET...

Fly over the CRESCENT CITY BRIDGE...

Across the west bank of the MISSISSIPPI RIVER...

To a far less opulent New Orleans neighborhood:

SUPER: *Algiers Point.*

EXT. BABINEAUX HOUSE - DAY

Monsignor Bernard, in full priestly garb, black leather tote in hand, approaches the front door.

He takes in a MANGLED 10-SPEED BIKE lying at the doorsteps - its tires worn to the rim, seat twisted, spokes exploded out - he steps over the wreck, climbs to the front door.

INT. BABINEAUX HOUSE - DAY

Monsignor Bernard follows MR. & MRS. BABINEAUX up the stairs to the 2nd floor. Mr. Babineaux has the greasy hands of a mechanic. Mrs. Babineaux is still in her night gown...

MRS. BABINEAUX

He left last night for Lake Pontchartrain to meet some friends... I don't know how he got that bike back across the bridge.

MR. BABINEAUX

Showed up at the doorstep this morning like a raving lunatic ... like the devil got a hold of him. Show him, Carla...

Mrs. Babineaux pulls back the sleeve of her night gown... shows the BRUISE OF A BITE MARK.

INT. 2ND FLOOR LANDING - DAY

Standing before a closed bedroom door, Monsignor Bernard places a comforting hand on their shoulders.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

You've done the right thing, calling upon the Lord... in His presence, the devil can have no foothold.

Mr. Babineaux pushes open the bedroom door to reveal JIMMY BABINEAUX, a teenage boy, naked, his neck chained to the headboard.

Monsignor Bernard watches the boy bear his teeth, froth at the mouth, like an animal caught in a trap.

MR. BABINEAUX

'Bout all I could do... fix him to that bed with his own bike lock. Keep him from hurtin' himself... or somebody else.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

I'll need the room alone. But I need your help. The two of you, go down stairs and pray.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Monsignor Bernard gently closes the door...

He sets his tote bag on the dresser...

Paces a semi-circle around the bed...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Jimmy, it's Monsignor Bernard, I'm here to help you, my son.

Jimmy growls - flails - veins bulge from his forehead - spittle flies -

JIMMY

Mamba Gran come! She told me! Tell you!

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Who told you to tell me, Jimmy?

INTERCUT:

Shots are between Jimmy writhing in bed and his drug-fueled bike ride across the bridge the night before. The effect is ear-splitting - electric haywire - visual meltdown.

EXT. CRESCENT CITY BRIDGE - **THE NIGHT BEFORE**

Jimmy pedals his bike hard across the bridge, hopped up on meth, shirtless body covered in sweat -

JIMMY (O.S.)

The lady! On the bridge!

The FIGURE OF A WOMAN standing in the glow beneath a bridge light draws us like a moth to a flame...

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy grips his skull with both hands - writhing in pain.

Monsignor Bernard begins to remove the tools of an exorcism from his tote... A BIBLE... A VIAL OF HOLY WATER... BEESWAX CANDLES...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

And what did she wish you to tell
me, Jimmy?

EXT. CRESCENT CITY BRIDGE - **THE NIGHT BEFORE**

Jimmy is stopped on his bike before the lady on the bridge.
She's young, beautiful, hypnotizing... and we finally
recognize her as young Delphine LaLaurie and as she speaks we
hear her words from Jimmy -

JIMMY (O.S.)

Mamba Gran! The baby must die!

As Delphine speaks those words... her visage begins to rot...
worms and maggots crawl from her mouth and eyes -

Jimmy falls back off his bike - leaps up - begins to ride on
- away from her - just as fast as he can -

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bernard, his hands full of candles, stops...

BERNARD

The Vodou Queen has come.

After he takes the statement in, he moves to place the
candles around the bed when his foot stubs a CELLPHONE,
sending it across the floor...

He sets down the candles, picks up the phone, reads the
screen: *AMY - 13 MISSED CALLS*.

He presses to dial up Amy, puts the phone to his ear. Her
voice comes through immediately...

AMY'S VOICE

Jimmy! Jimmy?

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

(listens)

Hello, Amy?

AMY'S VOICE

Who is this?

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Amy, this is Monsignor Bernard--

AMY'S VOICE

Oh my God - is Jimmy dead?

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

No no... Jimmy's alive, I'm here
with him.

AMY'S VOICE

Lemme talk to him!

Monsignor Bernard looks to Jimmy, who is fighting to squeeze
out of the lock around his neck like a rabid canine.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

I'm afraid he's in no condition to
talk. But you can help Jimmy. I need
you to tell me what happened last
night... and be completely honest
with me child.

AMY'S VOICE

*We we're out at Lake
Pontchartrain...*

(she starts to cry)

*... it was a big St. John's Eve
thing... we're just partying... but
some of the guys started snorting
some yellow powdery stuff...*

(now bawling)

*... then he just flipped out... like
a crazy man... and took off on his
bike... I didn't know what to do.*

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

I see. It's okay, Amy. You're gonna
help me. I'm putting you on
speaker...

Monsignor Bernard places the phone on the dresser.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Can you hear me?

AMY'S VOICE

(over speaker)

Yeah, I can hear.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Good. Here's what I need you to do.
I need you to say one thing, over
and over, loudly and with all your
heart... say: "I love you, Jimmy."

She obeys... her voice fills the room, repeating the
incantation...

"I LOVE YOU, JIMMY! I LOVE YOU, JIMMY! I LOVE YOU, JIMMY!"

Monsignor Bernard watches Jimmy's ears prick up.

He slowly steps to the bed, stands over Jimmy... gently pets the boy's forehead...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
Amy loves Jimmy... and so does
Jesus...

Monsignor Bernard begins to gently rub Jimmy's temples in slow circles... Jimmy's eyes roll back to white... and when they return, the boy is back in his body.

Jimmy gazes around, gaining his bearings, as if waking from a nightmare...

JIMMY
AMY!?

AMY'S VOICE
(over speaker)
Jimmy!? Oh my God, Jimmy are you
okay?

Jimmy feels the BIKE LOCK around his neck...

JIMMY
Why'd you do this, Monsignor?

Monsignor Bernard calls to the phone...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
Amy, hang up now, Jimmy will call
you back.

AMY'S VOICE
(on speaker)
But, Monsignor, no--

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
Amy, be of faith.

AMY'S VOICE
(on speaker)
Okay, Monsignor... I love you,
Jimmy.

The call goes dead.

Monsignor Bernard lowers to the combination lock around the boy's neck...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
What's the combination, Jimmy?

JIMMY
My birthday.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
And that is?

JIMMY
10-26.

Monsignor Bernard dials the numbers on the lock and removes the chain from the headboard.

He steps to his tote bag... pulls out a small crucifix... places it on Jimmy's bare chest... pulls up the sheets to cover his naked body.

Jimmy clutches the cross for all its worth, begins reciting the Lord's prayer...

JIMMY
Our Father, Who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - JACKSON SQUARE - DAY

Lovers lay on blankets on the grass...

Seniors sit on benches, soaking in the sun...

Children run to and fro across the lawn, toting free BALLOONS being handed out...

Kat, sitting on a bench, drinking coffee and eating a beignet, gazes up at the majestic

STATUE OF ANDREW JACKSON

rearing on his massive horse - *"The Union Must And Shall Be Preserved!"*

From behind, Kat hears a...

EVE (O.S.)
Psst - Missus.

Kat turns to see the little girl in her frilly pink dress, as if she's hiding from being seen...

EVE
(at a whisper)
Look... out there... that's my gran'mama.

The little girl points outward...

Kat turns to see...

Marie Laveau, the voodoo priestess from the teaser, before the steps of St. Louis Cathedral.

She lifts two infant children from an old-time wicker baby buggy.

EVE (O.S.)
Them're Cat'rine an' Dominic... 'fore they grow'd up.

Kat watches Marie proudly carry the two babies up the steps of the cathedral.

KAT
Why are you showing me this?

EVE (O.S.)
Cuz she said to.

KAT
 Who?

EVE (O.S.)
*My gran'mama... she's Marie
 Laveau... she said you're gonna help
 me.*

Kat watches Marie disappear inside the church.

KAT
 Help you with what?

Kat turns back to see the little girl is gone.

EXT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - DAY

Its THREE SPIRES to the sky, the CENTER SPIRE the tallest,
 raising a CROSS to the heavens.

TOURISTS climb the steps toward the church's open doors.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - FOYER - DAY

Kat merges with the TOURISTS as an ALBINO GUIDE pontificates
 in a hushed, reverent tone -

ALBINO GUIDE
 It was in this very church that
 Voodoo found its foot in
 Catholicism. That is solely due to
 Father Pere Atoine, whose portrait
 you can see right there.

Kat looks to PERE ANTOINE'S PORTRAIT, a painting of a plump,
 lively man with dragging sideburns, posed before a desk in
 priestly garb.

ALBINO GUIDE
 Father Antoine's acceptance of
 voodoo arose from his friendship
 with the local Voodoo Queen of the
 time, whom he secretly baptized
 here. Her name was Marie Laveau.

Kat follows the tour group as they move...

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - SANCTUARY - DAY

Worn WOODEN PEWS...

17th century FONT, LECTERN and PULPIT preserved through the ages...

A sea of BURNING CANDLES illuminates the glorious architecture...

ALBINO GUIDE'S VOICE (O.S.)

Marie Laveau was one of the most renowned and feared women New Orleans had ever known.

Kat takes a seat in a back pew. In her own world she watches...

Marie Laveau and the two infants at the stone font before Father Pere Antoine (the man from the painting), who pours holy water over the children in baptismal ceremony.

Albino Guide touches Kat's shoulder, startling her...

ALBINO GUIDE

You with the tour, Ma'am?

Kat shakes her head... when she turns back to the baptism her ghostly vision has vanished.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - RECTORY - DAY

Kat walks a long hall to a slightly open door... on it a name plate... "MONSIGNOR BERNARD"...

Kat knocks on the door, inadvertently hinging it open to see...

Monsignor Bernard hanging upside down on an inversion table, his eyes closed, his earbuds leaking old REM.

KAT

Excuse me... *excuse me!*... EXCUSE ME!

Bernard's eyes pop open - he yanks the earbuds - flips upright - peels open the velcro ankle straps -

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Well, hello...

He kills his iPod music... straightens his jogging suit and hair... conjures his priestly posture.

KAT

I'm sorry to interrupt...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Herniated discs... bike accident in a triathlon... I know, I know... "heal thy self"... and I'm trying. Well how can I help you, Miss...?

KAT

Missus Lagraine.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

How can I help you, Mrs. Lagraine?

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL RECTORY HALLWAY - DAY

Monsignor Bernard leads Kat down a spiral staircase...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Are you Mrs. Myles Lagraine?

KAT

Yes... he's my husband. Do you know him?

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

I know of him... his work in the 9th Ward... a tremendous service. How long have you been in the Crescent City?

KAT

I just arrived last week. We were apart for three months while he got things settled and I finished out the school year.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Ah, school year? Learning or teaching?

KAT

Well, I did my learning at Berkeley... but my teaching was 3rd grade in Oakland.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Well, we're glad to have you both among us.

INT. ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL - CHURCH LIBRARY - DAY

A basement room of wood and stone. Wall-to-wall TOWERING BOOKCASES shelving the ANTIQUE LEDGERS that hold all the fact and fiction that is the history of New Orleans.

Monsignor Bernard knows just where to roll the cherry wood ladder... lifts himself carefully up its steps... wrestles an OVERSIZED LEDGER from its shelf...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
If you wish to know of Marie
Laveau... I'd start here.

He sets the TOME down on the table before Kat. He starts for the door...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD
I'll leave you to yourself. Just
press the intercom when you're done,
I have the key. I'll see you out.

Monsignor Bernard exits, sealing the door with A WHOOSH behind him.

Kat looks down at the HUGE LEDGER before her on the table.

She opens it to see a portrait of

MARIE LAVEAU

with the colorful tignon atop her head... her slight grin... her hypnotic eyes staring out at her.

EXT. ZOZO'S VODOO SHOPPE - DAY

Kat stands on the curb, tote bag on her elbow, eyes for a taxi.

A passing DRUNK TOURIST drops his plastic beer cup, splashing Kat's boot.

As she shakes the beer from her foot, tourist injects -

DRUNK TOURIST
Sorry, lady...

As he and his buddies steal her cab.

The end of a WALKING STICK RAPS AGAINST KAT'S ANKLE -

Kat, startled, turns to see Gertrude standing before her, staring into her despite blind eyes...

GERTRUDE

Ago! Ago!

Gertrude gropes out to Kat - feels for and GRIPS THE CROSS on Kat's necklace -

GERTRUDE

Mamba Gran come!

Kat, unnerved, pulls her necklace from the old woman's hand -

KAT

I'm sorry - I don't know who you are
- I think you've mistaken--

Gertrude GRIPS KAT'S WRIST - SHE BITES DOWN ON KAT'S FOREARM!

Kat yanks free - a taxi wheels up -

INT. TAXI - DAY

Kat frantically climbs inside to escape -

KAT

1140 Royal Street, please!

Gertrude BANGS HER WALKING STICK against the cab window -

GERTRUDE

De poison is the cure!

KAT

(to cab driver)
Go! Please! Now!

Taxi pulls out into traffic -

CABBIE, a patch over one eye, let's out a bit of chuckle.

Kat catches his one-eyed look in the rear-view mirror.

KAT

What's so fucking funny?

She looks at her forearm - skin broken -

KAT

That old woman bit me!

CABBIE

'Round here... one thing we learn't
about ol' Gertrude... there is a
madness to her method.

Kat looks back OUT THE REAR WINDOW to see Gertrude groping her way though the voodoo shop door.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - TUTORING ROOM - DAY

RayRay sits at the old school desk, reading from *The Selected Poems of Mary Howitt...*

RAYRAY
 (reading slowly)
*Sw...eet cre-a-ture... said the spi-
 der to the fly... you are...
 witee... an' you are... wise?*

He looks up at Kat who stands with a hand on his shoulder, reading along with him.

KAT
 Yes, you're doing great.

RayRay spots something moving on the desk -

RAYRAY
 Look! A spider!

A BABY SPIDER crawls across the desk...

RAYRAY
 I'm not scairt...

Kat grabs the book from RayRay's hands -SMASHES THE SPIDER!

RayRay looks up to her, shocked...

RAYRAY
 But... Mrs. Lagraine... what if that
 spider just wanted to git home?

Kat collects herself... hands the book back...

KAT
 This is my home.

RayRay looks down at the floor...

RAYRAY
 We gonna need a whole bunch more
 books!

Kat looks down to see A HOST OF BABY BLACK SPIDERS that scurry up OVER THE EDGES OF THE DESK -

RayRay SHOVES OUT - CRASHES THE DESK OVER - lands on his rear
- points in terror at

THE BREAK IN THE FLOORBOARDS

where an ARMY OF SPIDERS emerge -

Kat sees it - quickly grabs the book from the floor - lays it
over the broken floorboard that GUSHES ARACHNIDS -

She grabs RayRay's hand, rushes him out the door.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

A LUNCH PLATE with a sandwich, Fritos, and a plop of
chocolate pudding sits untouched on RayRay's knees.

Kat sits beside him on the garden bench, her own plate
untouched.

RayRay's body begins to shiver and heave as he hands off the
plate... a frightened look on his face as he... ducks his
head between his knees and vomits forcefully.

Kat sees the blood and bile in the vomit on the brick...
disturbed, she pulls him into her bosom... she herself begins
to cry...

KAT

I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I'm so
sorry.

BEAUMONT'S VOICE (O.S.)

What's the trouble out here?

Kat looks up to see Beaumont emerge from his quarters, just
off a nap.

KAT

That broken floorboard, Beaumont - a
nest of spiders down there - it
should have been fixed.

Beaumont sees vomit at RayRay's feet. He PLUCKS A PEACH from
the tree. Squats before RayRay, tosses the RIPE PEACH from
hand-to-hand...

BEAUMONT

Look at me, boy.

KAT

Please, Beaumont, he's frightened.

BEAUMONT

Ain't so frightened he can't look an
old man in the eyes.

RayRay finally lifts his timid eyes to Beaumont.

BEAUMONT

Time you stop bein' afraid of what
you came here for, boy. An' you know
it. Right?

RayRay stares out at Beaumont.

BEAUMONT

You take this here peach, eat every
bit of it.

He places the RIPENED PEACH IN RAYRAY'S HAND.

BEAUMONT

Put the pit of it beneath your
pillow. Sleep on it. Nothin' more,
nothin' less. You understand me?

RayRay looks at the PEACH IN HIS HAND... finally nods.

Beaumont pats RayRay's shoulder.

BEAUMONT

Ain't nothin' in this world to be
afraid of. You been here before. An'
for good reason this time 'round.

Beaumont rises, looks to Kat.

BEAUMONT

And you have too.

KAT

What?

BEAUMONT

You'll come to know it, soon enough.

He picks a peach from the tree and tosses it to Kat.

BEAUMONT

Boy's gonna be fine. Now you can get
back to teachin' him whatever else
he needs to know. And I'll get to
mendin' that floor board.

Beaumont limps off, back toward his quarters.

Kat curiously watches RayRay bite into the peach as she ponders the one in her hand.

INT. JAZZ BAR - NIGHT

Myles is behind the piano on a small corner stage, playing with a quartet, and he's damn good.

AT A SMALL TABLE

Kat sits alone, watching Myles. She sucks the last of her drink through a straw.

An EBONY FINGER taps her shoulder, and without looking, Kat -

KAT

No thank you, I'm with my husband.

Now an AGED HAND comes to rest gently on her forearm.

Kat cranes to see an OLD TIMER (100 years plus) standing aside. He's a class act - brass cane, bowler hat, bright red bow tie. He bends to her ear...

OLD TIMER

I was raised to believe a beautiful woman shan't never sit alone...

(removes his hat)

Nor be without a strong libation.

Kat is immediately disarmed, and charmed... offers him a seat.

Old Timer eases into the chair beside her with a slow grace that belies his age.

Kat grips his leathery hand, leans close so he can hear -

KAT

And I was raised to appreciate a gentleman.

Old Timer pulls a whiskey flask, pours Kat a finger, takes a nip for himself, moves his lips to Kat's ear...

OLD TIMER

I knew your husband back when he was just a itty-bitty tot, though he won't remember me none.

Kat takes a sip of the moonshine - OUCH - she holds her ear to his lips so she can hear.

OLD TIMER

I ran here 'n there with his papa...
Charlie Lagraine, rest his soul. He
used to play trumpet, right in this
joint, be it know'd.

They both watch Myles play.

OLD TIMER

Charlie's boy turn't out to be a
real fine man... a *fine* doctor man.

KAT

(into his ear)
You must be sure to say hello.

OLD TIMER

When I learn't the two a you were
takin' reside in the old LaLaurie
house on Royal, well... have to
admit... the news brought back a
chill to these ol' bones... chill I
ain't felt since I can remember. Get
up over a hunner'd years old, like
myself, ain't much bring a chill...
'sides a breeze, through a half-open
window.

He chuckles at himself.

Kat speaks into his ear, close as she can get -

KAT

Who is LaLaurie? What happened in
the house?

OLD TIMER

My granny was a slave in that house,
be it know'd. Place been an open
wound on this city far too long.
Should 'a burnt it down the night
they drove that witch an' her doctor
husband fast outta town, way I see
it. Awful night for this city, it
was. April 11, 1834... a cruel,
cruel woman that Delphine LaLaurie.
(sips his flask)
Psalms 11:6... "*Upon the wicked He
shall rain fire... that shall be the
portion of their cup.*"

FROM MYLES' POV - from behind the piano - he looks out at
Kat, alone at a table... talking to no one... or maybe to
herself.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Myles lays in bed reading. From the bathroom we hear Kat, see her movement reflected in a mirror as she removes her makeup...

KAT

I was talking to the sweetest old man tonight at the club. He said he knew your father, knew you when you were too young to remember. Did you see him? Bowler hat, bow tie, walking cane?

Myles lowers the open book to his chest...

MYLES

No, Kat. I didn't see an old man dressed like that.

KAT

Are you at all interested to know the history of this house?

MYLES

Not really... I mean why? I've talked to Beaumont a bit, about the last few families that lived here.

KAT

The gentleman said this house should have been burned to the ground. Seemed to imply something horrible happened here.

Myles puts his book on the night stand, turns his back to Kat...

MYLES

For Christ's sake, Kat, something bad likely happened in every one of these old houses.

KAT

He said something about a woman who lived here... a witch... that got chased out of town.

MYLES

Kat. At the club... I saw you at the table... talking to *somebody*... but that *somebody* wasn't there.

Myles, exasperated, switches off the light on the night stand, buries his head in the pillow.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kat stares at her reflection in the mirror... at a loss for words...

She turns on the faucet... splashes her face with water... stares at her reflection again...

She opens the mirrored MEDICINE CABINET, removes a VIAL and drops TWO PINK OVAL PILLS into her palm...

She stares at the pills... then again at herself... then swiftly shoves the pills into her mouth.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. DOAKES HOUSE - MORNING

It's the crack of dawn. RayRay's little hands jostle his father awake from beneath the bed sheets...

RAYRAY

Papa, wake up. We made oatmeal.

Ray Sr. opens his eyes to see his son, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. Is this a dream? Ray Sr. sniffs the air... something is cooking.

RAY SR.

Whatta you talkin' 'bout, boy? How'd you learn to make oatmeal?

RAYRAY

Grandmama showed me. It was easy.

Ray Sr. swings his tired heavy legs out of bed, shakes off the night's sleep.

RAY SR.

Boy, your grandmama's been dead for over a year now. You must have been dreamin'.

RAYRAY

I know, papa. But just 'cause she died don't mean she's still not here.

Ray Sr. stares at his son in disbelief. It's too goddamn early in the morning for this conversation.

INT. GARDEN DISTRICT RESTAURANT - DAY

Myles and Dr. Carlyle sit over lunch at a corner table.

MYLES

So, have you determined whether or not Kat has been taking her meds?

DR. CARLYLE

I can't discuss that with you, Myles. It's privileged. You know that.

A gust of wind blows. Myles reaches across the table, tucks a stray strand of Claire's hair behind her ear.

MYLES

I understand.

Myles puts his utensils down on the plate.

MYLES

Look, I've been reading in the journals about a new psychotropic for Disassociative Identity Disorder. It looks hopeful. It's not to market yet, still in clinical trials, but I was thinking we could give it a shot.

DR. CARLYLE

Enroll Kat in a clinical trial? All that that entails? FDA? Do you really think she's gonna be up for it?

MYLES

Kat doesn't have to know... and neither do they. We're both professionals here, right?

DR. CARLYLE

Oh, Myles... I don't know.

MYLES

C'mon Claire... don't forget, you owe me one.

EXT. ST. ANN STREET - DAY

Kat and Monsignor Bernard stroll the sidewalk. You'd think he's the pope, seeing the admiration he absorbs from the locals.

Bernard stops before a nondescript CLAPBOARD HOME where there's a PLACARD on the surrounding fence...

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

This is where she lived her entire life. Marie Laveau - either the most powerful voodoo queen ever, or just a simple hairdresser with a keen ear for local gossip. Either way, she gets a placard.

KAT

May I ask you, Monsignor... the house my husband and I moved into...

KAT

I was told it has an infamous history... 1140 Royal Street?

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Ah... so you're the ones who bought the Royal Street house... been on the market for years.

KAT

The price was right... but a lot of fixing up to do.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Well, there's certainly records of the house in the library. But your best bet would be to talk to the caretaker... he's lived there his entire life. Have you kept him on?

KAT

Beaumont? Yes.

MONSIGNOR BERNARD

Pretty sure he'll have a lot more to say than some old news clippings from the *New Orleans Bee*.

Kat turns to the sound of a distant CLICKETY-CLACK... a block away... Gertrude shuffles toward them with her walking stick.

KAT

Monsignor - I've taken up too much of your time already -

Kat starts to backpedal -

KAT

Thank you so much for showing me the neighborhood.

Kat hurries off in the opposite direction of the old blind woman.

EXT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - COURTYARD - DAY

Kat, with a PASTRY BOX in arm, gently knocks on the door to Beaumont's quarters. Ajar, the door creaks open...

KAT

Beaumont?

Silence... broken by a "MEOW" as a WHITE TOMCAT scuttles from underneath the peach tree and shoots through the open door -

KAT
No -- kitty -- no!

Kat hurries in after the animal...

INT. BEAUMONT'S QUARTERS - DAY

One of the old slave quarters. A SINGLE BED. An old WORK TABLE with yarn, straw and COLORFUL FABRICS strewn about.

Kat gazes around at the

WALL OF VOODOO DOLLS

hanging in lines of perfect symmetry.

Kat sees the feline jump up on the bed. She sets the pastry box down on the work table where she's distracted by the sight of

A VOODOO DOLL

in the making... a Black female... being stuffed with cotton... to form a pregnant belly.

She is startled by the feel of the WHITE CAT brushing up against her leg with a purr. She sees an EMPTY BOWL on the floor beneath the work table.

INT. VOODOO SHOPPE BACKROOM - NIGHT

Gertrude shuffles around a single bed to the worn out OLD ROCKER.

She moves the chair and pokes at the floor boards with her walking stick...

POKES UP A LOOSE PLANK...

From underneath, she gropes out a GLASS JAR and hobbles it to the table...

With arthritic hands, she's unable to open the antique jar...

She slides open a drawer... feels out a HAMMER... SMASHES open the jar...

She fingers through the shards, searching for the jar's contents...

With a bleeding thumb, she picks up

A LOCK OF LONG BLACK HAIR

which she feels gingerly... its brittle texture... sniffs its musty odor... finally spits on it with a vengeance...

GERTRUDE

Mamba Gran come!

She walks to the wall where above her bed hangs

A CROSS

which she feels for... and once in her grip... she turns the cross upside down.

GERTRUDE

Make way for de Voudou Queen.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Candles light the room...

Kat, in a negligee, stands at the open window, listening to the BEATING DRUMS from across the Quarter...

KAT

How does anybody sleep with this?

Myles lays in bed, a sheet half over him...

MYLES

If it's not drums, it's saxophones,
or trumpets, or trombones...

He gets out of bed naked, goes to Kat, reaches up under her negligee... begins kissing her neck...

MYLES

It's in the blood of this town,
baby... that and a lot of booze.

He hits off a joint before he pulls her toward the bed, pulls her down on top of him... lifts her negligee off...

Kat gives in... lets him inside... begins to move in rhythm on top of him...

Myles flips Kat over... pins her hands to the bed... begins to thrust inside of her...

The BEAT OF THE DRUMS GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER -

Kat closes her eyes and grips her pillow - pulling it into her to reveal

A SINGLE PEACH PIT

placed beneath.

INT. BEAUMONT'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

From where he sits, Beaumont can see out to the MASTER BEDROOM WINDOW aglow with candlelight.

Beaumont reaches into the PASTRY BOX, takes a slice of the King Cake and takes a bite... yep, he picked the right slice... pulls out

THE TRADITIONAL PLASTIC INFANT

from his mouth.

He sets it aside with a toothy grin.

At his work table, under a gas lantern, he continues his work on the PREGNANT VODOO DOLL. He stuffs a PEACH PIT into the DOLL'S BELLY and begins to stitch it up.

INT. HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET - MASTER BEDROOM - EARLY A.M.

In the hazy morning gloom, Kat awakens to the mercurial figure of the little girl standing in the bedroom doorway - her voice at a whisper...

EVE

Come with me, Missus.

And then the apparition is gone.

INT. 3RD FLOOR HALLWAY - EARLY A.M.

Kat, in negligee, flips on the hall lights...

All is quiet but for the FAINT SOUND OF THE RATTLE AND DRAG from above...

The door to the 3rd floor middle room is cracked open...

DOWN THE HALLWAY

Kat grips THE DOORKNOB, slowly PUSHES OPEN THE DOOR... she steps into...

INT. 3RD FLOOR MIDDLE ROOM - EARLY A.M.

Kat switches on the light. The LIGHT BULB suddenly SURGES BRIGHT then quickly FIZZLES OUT - leaving Kat in the shadows.

EVE
(at a whisper)
I'm here.

Kat sees movement in the shadows. The room is empty. Kat stares up at the ceiling where the CHAIN SOUNDS GROW LOUDER...

We hear the SHRILL VOICE OF A WOMAN from above CALL OUT - "Evangeline?!"

Kat looks to the shadowed little girl...

KAT
Is that your name? *Evangeline?*

EVE
Gran'mama calls me Eve.

KAT
That voice, is she the one you told me about? Madam... ?

EVE
Delphine. Don't let her get me this time. Promise?

KAT
I promise.

EVE
But you can't eat those pink medicines anymore. Promise?

KAT
I promise.

Kat is startled by the LOUD CLUNK & CLAMOR OF CHAINS directly above -

EVE
She's coming!

The SOUND OF STRIDING BOOT HEELS grows LOUDER AND LOUDER... until the stride STOPS directly above Kat...

Kat looks, but the shadow of Eve is gone.

With a LOUD CREAK AND GRIND - A DROP-DOWN STAIRCASE lowers from the ceiling -

Kat gazes up the steps to see Delphine LaLaurie standing in the glow of the lantern she holds... her black widow dress... her pale visage...

DELPHINE

My dear...

A faint smile ignites Delphine's eyes, staring down on Kat...

DELPHINE

It seems lifetimes I've waited for you to come home.

Kat's breath stolen - her knees buckle - she crumbles to the hardwood floor.

END PILOT EPISODE