

In Memory of Maggie Leblanc
Gary Gautier

Market: Independent

Tag Line

“You won’t get it unless you’re ready for it”

Log Line

Opening amidst a New Age culture of yoga centers, quacks, gurus, and seekers, a young man’s stagnant life hits a crisis when his big brother shows up with the news that he has murdered Maggie Leblanc and asks for sanctuary. The fallout lands the young man (white) on a road trip through southern Louisiana with a black rival, misfits among misfits who find comic and poignant moments as they develop a deeper bond beneath their oil-and-water surface.

Synopsis

Phil, a sharp-witted, disgruntled nerd, is the oddball out at work and seems to be losing his artist girlfriend, Hermia, to a black salesman, Gus. Life advisors include the madcaps and mystics of the New Age culture in which he moves, not the least of which is his big brother, Magnus, charismatic, congenial, and a very powerful spiritual guide. An episodic tug-of-war between these characters dramatically changes when Magnus suddenly tells Phil that he has murdered Maggie Leblanc and asks for sanctuary.

After accommodating Magnus for a time, Phil’s inner torment reaches a breaking point and he goes to the police. The deeply intuitive Magnus flees just in time – with Phil’s girlfriend, Hermia. After some wrangling, Phil and Gus form an uneasy pact and follow the fleeing duo through small town Louisiana. Misfits among misfits, they are all oil-and-water on the surface but becoming deeply connected below. Phil and Gus finally lose the trail, but in the swamps they meet an old, black madwoman, Madame Peychaud, who turns out to have a psychic edge and a real impact on the story’s arc.

The two men return to New Orleans with no leads on the missing couple, but with some new ideas about life and the future. In his last attempt to track Magnus, Phil dons Magnus’s elaborate Mardi Gras costume, dressing slowly and methodically in a mock-heroic “arming of the warrior.” Since Magnus is always a high profile celebrant of Mardi Gras in the French Quarter, Phil hopes someone will recognize the costume and mistake him for Magnus, and that the ensuing discussion might yield clues about the real Magnus and Hermia.

In the French Quarter, Phil is surrounded by the phantasmagoria of mock-identity and excess that is Mardi Gras, but no sign of anyone who can help. But the one person he does find, in the shadow of the Cathedral, is the living, breathing Maggie Leblanc! Thus begins a rapid discovery sequence that brings Madame Peychaud back and leaves Maggie dead, Magnus ambiguously dead or “in India,” and Phil and Gus setting up shop to sweep the New Age markets with Magnus’s memoirs and notebooks, which they have received from Maggie in sealed boxes with instructions from Magnus “to my brother, who will be ready for this when he receives it.”