

Nimble Men

Yannick Carter, 65, his wits aren't what they used to be, but he holds his traditions. Steven Carter, 30, recently engaged, he is gullible, but very much his father's son.

Scotland.

A large fishing boat takes centre stage, waves of dark fabric flutter around it creating the waves in a storm. The boats name Wading Matilda and it is etched on the side, but slightly worn. The fishing boat has a main section in the centre of the boat, which leads upstairs to the controls and downstairs (unseen) to the living quarters. We see an elderly man, with wild hair he's on the boats bow, eyes forward, like a figurehead. This is Yannick - he is dressed in a waterproof mac, the time is around 7:10pm, the sun has just set. Yannick checks his watch.

Yannick *(Shouting at the top of his lungs)* Marlin!! Marlin! Off the portside bow. Get up Steven, Marlin! Marlin!!

Yannick remains still at the front of the boat. Suddenly, Steven emerges from inside the ship, he's half way through putting on his waterproofs.

Steven trips

Yannick Fuck, where is it pa?
Up here boy!!

Steven runs to the front to see where Yannick is pointing, but he's pointing at his watch.

Steven What, where is it has it gone under?

Yannick No it hasn't even surfaced. That was a test, and you failed. You'll need to be quicker when the marlin comes.

Steven For fuck's sake, you disturbed me, I was in the middle of, erm, of sleeping.

Yannick No time to sleep where we're hunting. That's lesson number three, don't sleep.

Steven Why are you giving me all these rules?

Yannick It's character building, son.

Steven What's that, 'character building' you say that to a kid!

Yannick You're out here to learn, am I right?

Steven Are you kidding me?

Yannick What!

Steven I've been working for ya on this boat since I was a lad.

Yannick But this time's different.

Steven How?!

Yannick There's a marlin to find, Steven.

Steven Are you sure we'll find one here? They're pretty rare.

Yannick Nothing's rare in the sea Steven, apart from land. That's rule number 4, nothing's rare.

Steven Apart from land.

Yannick makes his way to the stern to check on the net.

Yannick Good lad, you're catching on.
Steven You know I haven't got time for this pa? I've got a wedding to plan.

Yannick starts to reel in the net. Steven eventually helps him.

Yannick Yer kidding? You're the husband you don't go near that.
Steven She wants me to help.

Yannick No she don't.
Steven Trust me, she said she wants me to make decisions so that it's a day for the both of us.
Yannick She's pulling ye leg, son.
Steven Nah, that's where you're wrong, the other day I helped pick out the flowers.
Yannick And where was your wife?
Steven Behind me.
Yannick Lesson number 5, wife knows best.
Steven You're a fucking hypocrite you know that?
Yannick How's that?

The net is brought up, there's only seaweed.

Steven Ma told you not to take me, to your face, she said what we were doing was reckless.
Yannick Yeah so?
Steven And you didn't listen.
Yannick Ah no, I did.
Steven Pa, I'm standing right here, you didn't hear a word she said.
Yannick Of course I heard, I just choose to ignore her.
Steven For the sake of what - a marlin.
Yannick The biggest ride of your life m'boy.

Yannick runs inside to the boat, and rummages for something downstairs.

Steven What the hell are we going to do with all this?

Yannick renters holding a whiskey bottle and two glasses.

Yannick Ah throw it away. But not this, you savour this boy.

Steven throws the netting back. Yannick brings two crates out from the side and sits on one, he invites Steve to sit on the other.

There, that's you.

Yannick pours Steven a glass.

Steven Carter Scotch? (Laughs) You brought this along.
Yannick I thought you could be the first to try our first batch.
Steven Pa, this is, this means a lot.
Yannick Shut the hell up and drink.

Steven drinks the whiskey.

Steven (With a coarse voice) Oh, god, Yannick, that's so strong.
Yannick Of course it is, this is what's in the Carter blood.

Yannick drinks the whiskey.

Yannick (With a coarse voice) Holy hell you're right.
Steven (Coarse) Maybe this should be drank moderately.
Yannick (Coarse) Definitely not!

Yannick drinks some more. The two sit, drinking in a silence for a while. The sea is calm now, the moon is rising in the distance, and from just above them, rays of pale green light are starting to form.

Yannick This is one of the main reasons I took you out here, it's been hard just to find the time for the both of us. What with you and the wedding, me and the Tribal Council, we've-

Steven -It's just a council, pa. It's not a tribal council.
Yannick We've been making a lot of good positive steps, you know they're going to build a tourist centre now?
Steven For who? We get less than twenty people a year.
Yannick For more people, there will be, wait, you just wait and see. Rule number 6, be patient.
Steven What is it with these rules? The first one you said kind of makes all the others void.
Yannick Ah the first rule, yes, what, what was that, again?
Steven To not always trust you.
Yannick Ya! And a fine rule that is too.
Steven But by definition/ I can't trust you when you say the others.
Yannick Look up there she's starting, the Aurora borealis, the 'merry dancers' there they are.

Yannick looks at the whiskey bottle and then at Steven.

Wait, you can see this too right?
Steven (Transfixed) Yeah, I can.

Long pause.

Yannick Remember when I used to read you Hemingway?
Steven The travelling fella?
Yannick Ya that one. There was this quote from "For Who The Bell Tolls". 'There's no *one* thing that's true.'
Steven/Yannick 'It's all true'
Yannick Aye you remember.
Steven Never got it. You had it over your desk at home.
Yannick Do you get it now?
Steven Now? Erm, I, I don't think so, I don't. No.
Yannick Well now's a finer time than any, look up at her, in the sky. That's real, for us, it's a dance in the sky, or a fight if ya like. The sky warriors are waging war on each other again. For them boffins it's something to do with the sun. And those Native American fellas, they believe it's the spirits of their ancestors. A 'dance of the dead'. They must be right - because it had such an affect on'em. It's their faith, you know? So - why are their ancestors over here, treating us to a show? It's definitely them, I mean, the Natives aren't lying. Well, it's not just them, our ancestors are up their fighting and dying too. And over in America, the Natives are watching our great fathers shedding blood. We're both right, you know. Not just one fella can be right.

Yannick turns all his attention to his son.

Now, I want you to listen to me now, because I'm only ever going to say this to you once. And I mean it. Make yourself happy whatever that means, but remember your duty to your family. Soon you'll have kids of your own and I hope to hell you raise them well, because me and your ma won't be here to do that. Make sure they don't turn out like little shits, raise'em properly. Love your wife, do everything for her, and don't ever betray her. There's a reason you're getting married, son, so remember that.

Yannick takes a swing of whiskey

But on top of that, know this. You're the man of the house now. My time as pa'p is over. I'm leaving. You my son, need to learn this, you need to learn what responsibility and duty mean, fast. Which is why we're here, which is why we're hunting a marlin.

Steven Wait, pa, what do you mean you're leaving?
Yannick This is about you becoming the man, and I can't be in the way of that.
Steven So where are you actually going?
Yannick This you've got to stop. Stop analysing me, I'm telling ya that you're in charge when we get back. I'm an old man, and you've got to fend for ya'self now, understand?
Steven Yes I guess so.
Yannick Grand. Now let's get that marlin.

Yannick rises and heads to the inside of the boat, he grabs a lot of rope.

Steven No use finding one in there.
Yannick Steven.
Steven Ya?
Yannick Go over to that mast.
Steven The mast?
Yannick Ya.
Steven Right, okay.
Yannick You there?
Steven Well, yeah.
Yannick Close your eyes. And lean against it.

Steven closes his eyes, and leans against the pole. Yannick quickly goes over to the pole with the rope.

Yannick The world is a beautiful place Steven, and so is our island. And it's your responsibility now to take care of them all. Join the tribal council-
Steven -just council.
Yannick All of them sods. Show them what my son is made of. Here's the thing, they need us, but only one of us. I've served my time.

Yannick starts to tie the rope around the pole tight. And then around Steven, he stays still and has his eyes closed, but you can tell he's getting confused.

You've got to fight to be in this world son. You can't just get it, my pa took me out to catch a marlin when I was a boy, and my god I fought like a buck.
Steven And did you catch it?
Yannick What?

Yannick has finished the knot, and now stands in front of Steven.

Steven The marlin, did ya catch it?
Yannick No Steven, there aren't any round here.
Steven (Opening his eyes) What?
Yannick The marlin ain't a fish, son. It's a metaphor.
Steven What?!
Yannick It's a metaphor.
Steven What do you mean it's a metaphor?
Yannick Basically, in this example, a marlin is representing something else-
Steven -I know what a fucking metaphor is, I'm asking you what does it represent!?
Yannick The fight.

Yannick throws the whiskey over starboard.

And now you've got to face your own marlin boy, like I did.
Steven What? Hey, what am I supposed to do?
Yannick Prove that you're my son, come back home.
Steven And if I drown.
Yannick Then I know you're not.
Steven This is fucking crazy, untie me now pa, have you completely lost it?!
Yannick This is the best lesson my father ever taught me. You have to fight to survive, and you have to come home to your wife.
Steven Pa...
Yannick If you don't fight for nothing then you're not living for something important enough. Lesson number 7: Do everything for the ones you love.

And with that, Yannick jumps overboard. Steven screams out in pain.

Steven Pa!!! Godammit pa!!!

Long pause.

Behind Wading Matilda emerges a small rowing boat, Yannick is on it with his bottle of whiskey.

Yannick Go on then, hurry up, there's a storm coming!

Yannick rows off stage. Steven is seen tied to the boat, writhing trying to get loose.

-End-