



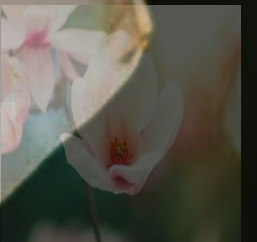
BENEATH THE MAGNOLIA TREE

Suspense / Family Drama – 90-minute TV Movie (MOW)

"Some roots run too deep to pull up without blood."

LOGLINE

When a high-profile trauma therapist returns to her childhood home in Atlanta's historic West End to settle her estranged mother's estate, she's confronted by a teenage girl claiming to be her sister — and by dangerous secrets buried in the walls that someone will kill to keep hidden.



THE HOOK

Unique Selling Point:

A Southern Gothic mystery fused with emotional family drama, exploring Black womanhood, generational trauma, and redemption.

Female-led, high emotional stakes, with a suspense twist tailor-made for Lifetime, OWN, and BET+ audiences.

A rare blend of psychological tension and heartfelt healing arc.



Magnolia in bloom



Mother's secrets



Family history



West End bungalow

TONE & COMPARABLES

Atmospheric

Emotional

Tense

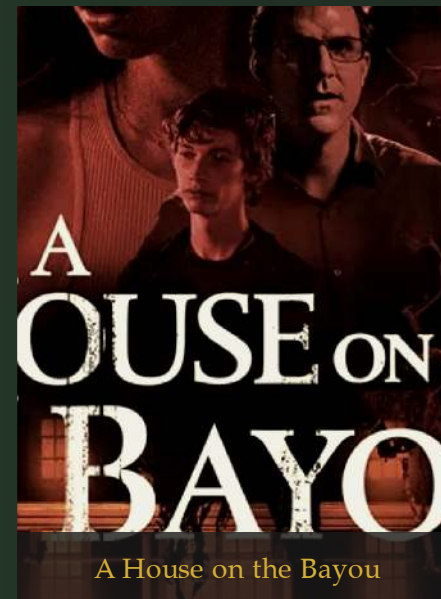
Comparable Titles:

A House on the Bayou – Southern suspense with secrets

Secrets of the Summer House – Family drama with a twist

Greenleaf – Faith, family, and buried sins

The Intruder – Unsettling presence in a home setting



MAIN CHARACTER

Dr. Maya Collins

Age: 38 | Role: Protagonist – trauma therapist

- *Highly controlled, analytical, emotionally guarded. Presents a composed exterior that masks deep unresolved trauma.*
- *Wants to close her mother's estate quickly and leave her past behind. Avoids emotional connections to protect herself.*
- *Forced to confront painful memories and new truths that challenge her identity and professional expertise.*
- *Journey arc: From emotional avoidance to acceptance, from isolation to connection, from running to standing ground.*

Casting Options



Kerry Washington



Tika Sumpter



Simone Missick

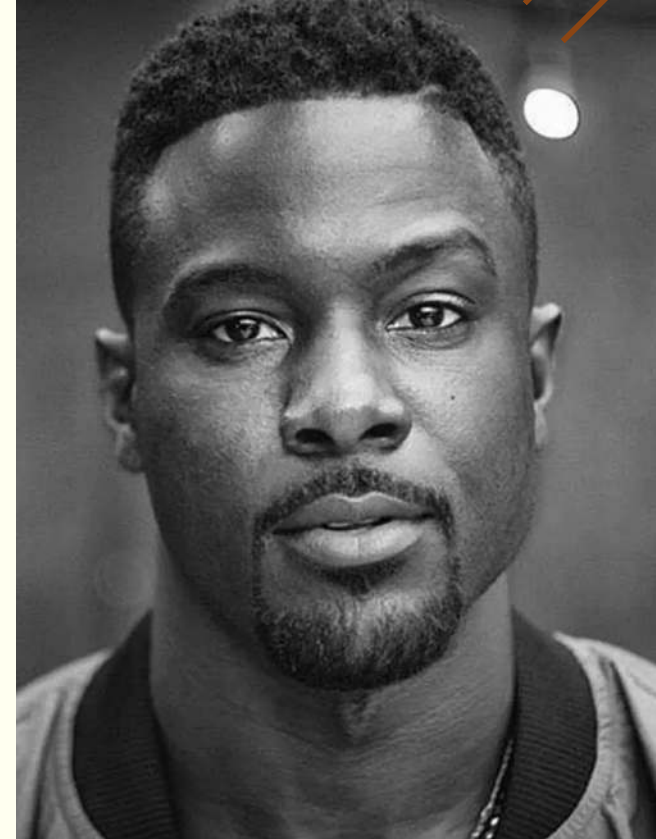


ROMANTIC LEAD / ANTAGONIST

Detective Andre Hightower

Local detective and old childhood acquaintance who becomes Maya's reluctant ally in uncovering the truth.

- Loyal, intuitive, with an unspoken history with Maya.
- Starts as a skeptic of her claims but grows to trust her instincts.
- Their shared history rekindles unresolved feelings.
- Torn between professional duty and personal connection.



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



Simone Collins

17

Street-smart, guarded teen claiming to be Maya's sister.



Mrs. Loretta Baker

60s

Neighbor and family friend with ties to Ruthie Mae's secrets.



Carla Dunn

40s

Ruthie Mae's former protégé, hiding her own agenda.



James "JD" Daniels

50s

Ruthie Mae's on-again, off-again partner; volatile.

PLOT SUMMARY



ACT 1

Maya returns to West End for the first time in 20 years; meets Simone, who claims to be her sister; unsettling incidents begin in the house as she tries to quickly settle her mother's estate.



ACT 2

Maya uncovers her mother's hidden network of helping abused young girls; tensions rise with locals who want the past buried; Detective Hightower becomes an unexpected ally.



ACT 3

The truth is revealed — Simone's life is in danger, and Maya must risk everything to protect her, choosing to finally stay and heal rather than run from her past.



VISUAL STYLE

Color Palette



Mood Board Keywords

- Southern Gothic
- Muted golds & greens
- Dappled light
- Peeling paint
- Handwritten letters
- Lingering shadows
- Magnolia blossoms
- Emotional intimacy
- Slow-burn suspense

Visual Approach

Contrasting the pristine, golden-lit Buckhead skyline with the shadowed, overgrown West End bungalow. Magnolia motifs throughout, transitioning from white blooms to weathered petals as the story unfolds.



DREAM CAST

Maya Collins



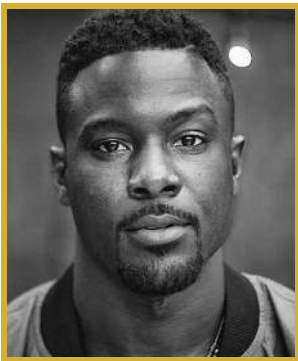
Kerry Washington

Simone Collins



Laya DeLeon Hayes

Det. Andre Hightower



Lance Gross

Mrs. Loretta Baker



Alfre Woodard

Maya Collins (Alt.)



Tika Sumpter

Simone Collins (Alt.)



Sanai Victoria

Det. Hightower (Alt.)



Kendrick Sampson

Mrs. Baker (Alt.)



Loretta Devine

Maya Collins (Alt.)



Simone Missick

Simone Collins (Alt.)



Kylie Jefferson

Det. Hightower (Alt.)



Michael Ealy

Mrs. Baker (Alt.)



Phylicia Rashad



WHY IT WORKS

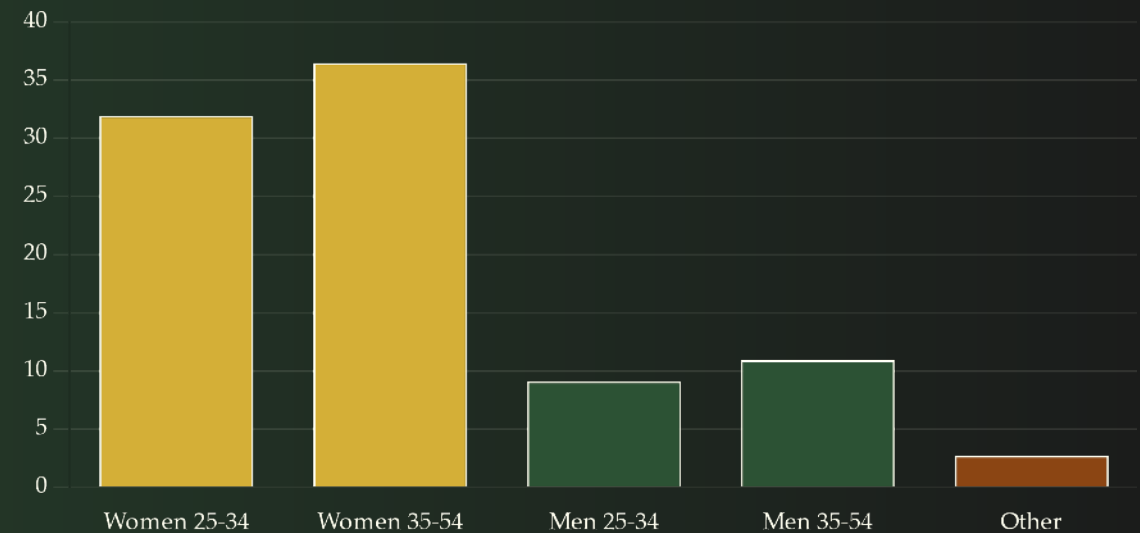
- ✓ Strong Black female lead with layered emotional arc that resonates with target demographics
- ✓ Southern Gothic setting appeals to audiences craving rich atmosphere and cultural authenticity
- ✓ Emotional stakes grounded in family, identity, and survival — themes that perform well
- ✓ Suspense-driven storyline with high "twist factor" that keeps viewers engaged
- ✓ Franchise potential as part of a "Legacy Claimed" anthology series

Lifetime

OWN

BET+

Audience Demographics (%)



Target Audience Profile:

Women 25-54 with strong interest in suspense dramas, family stories, and culturally authentic narratives. High engagement with similar content on target platforms and strong social media discussion potential.

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Thank you for your consideration

