

Die Kanadische Reise

(Frankr./Kanada 2017, Kinostart 14.12.2017)

Regie: Philippe Lioret

Besprechung von Becky Tan

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Mathieu (Deladonchamps) in France, receives a call from a stranger, Pierre (Arcand), in Canada. Matthieu learns that his father, Jean, died in a fishing accident, and has left him a package. He is stunned to say the least, because his mother, who died eight years prior, always told him that he was the result of a one-night stand, father unknown. Mathieu takes leave from his wife and small son, and departs for Montreal. He meets Pierre, who turns out to be his father's old friend and colleague (both working in medicine). In the end he even stays in Pierre's house with his wife Angie (Fortin). Their daughter Bettina (de Léan) is visiting from Vancouver with the two granddaughters. Their friendship grows, including a spark of attraction between Mathieu and Bettina, a bad idea, since both are married. Pierre gives him his father's package: a valuable painting of a young man. Access to the two half-brothers, whose existence is also a surprise, is more difficult. Pierre suggests that Mathieu take it slowly and pretend to be his guest. Eventually they all go out together around the lake to search for the father's body. Although the details are uncertain, Jean is assumed dead; the funeral will commence without a corpse. Mathieu eagerly absorbs stories about his father, which Pierre can relate in great detail.

Director Philippe Loret said he was inspired by the book *Si ce livre pouvait me rapprocher de toi* by Jean-Paul Dubois, although "only keywords are left: father, discovery, brotherhood, Canada, sister." In other words, the film is not a direct adaptation of the book. It was filmed mostly in Canada with all French-Canadian actors, except for Deladonchamps, who comes from France. Most musical background stems from the plot; for example, Bettina and her father play a Chopin waltz on the piano. The story progresses slowly as family secrets are revealed in very small hints, easy to miss if one does not pay attention. My first reaction was, "I want to view this excellent film again, right now, so that I can detect small clues that I missed the first time." It first showed at the 2016 Toronto film festival.