

WHAT WE FOUND IN THE WOODS

Written by

Jordan-Paige Sudduth

Based on

Rings Web Series
(2017-2018)

Written, Directed, and Produced by
Jordan-Paige Sudduth

WGA Registration
#2135381

sudduthjordanpaige@gmail.com

ACT 1

FADE IN:

OVER BLACK

LABORED BREATHING sounds like thunder in the quiet of the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - NIGHT

The tops of trees slowly come into focus.

VIOLET HENDRICKS (16), headstrong, secretly empathetic, and nearly always hiding behind her emotional mask, blinks rapidly, trying to clear her vision.

WHISPERS float through the air.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

I'm giving you three seconds.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Get away from her.

YOUNGER FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

I didn't mean to, I swear. I won't say anything.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Shut up!

Violet tries to move, but only her fingers twitch.

VIOLET

Not again, please not again.

Violet struggles. She manages to turn her head towards the disembodied voices.

Three ghost-like figures flicker in and out of reality, too transparent to really leave an impression.

The voices grow louder.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

One.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

I swear to god--

VIOLET
(sotto)
It's just a dream. Just a dream.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Two.

YOUNGER FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Please!

The sound of struggle, but there's nothing in sight. Violet tries to push herself off the ground. Her arms shake and she falls back to the ground.

She turns her head and realizes she's laying right near a drop, where the ground falls into a river below.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
There's no point. It's done, it's over. Let her go.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Three.
FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
No! VIOLET
No!

A SNAP echoes through the trees, then a THUMP as a YOUNG GIRL, suddenly visible, falls to the ground face to face with Violet, her neck snapped at an unnatural angle.

Violet watches the life disappear from her eyes.

Violet YELLS as she leans away from the body, throwing herself off balance, and she falls over the edge and SPLASHES into the dark river below.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - DORM 113 - BATHROOM - DAY

Violet GASPS as she lifts her head out of the water.

As she gulps in air, she takes in her surroundings. She's dressed in her pajamas, face down in her bathtub filled with water.

Slowly, she pushes herself onto her back, then pulls the drain on the bathtub. The water swirls down the drain.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - HALLWAY - DAY

Violet walks down the empty hall, attempting to tie her tie, but quickly gives up. She takes it off and shoves it into her pocket.

NOAH SANTOS (15), rational, bright, and the real life equivalent of a comfort character in a young adult novel, falls into step with her, his uniform ironed and spotless.

VIOLET

You're late.

NOAH

Why's your hair all wet?

VIOLET

It's this new thing called a shower. You should try it sometime.

NOAH

Someone's unpleasant this morning.

VIOLET

Did you think to grab me a--?

Noah grabs a muffin out of his bag and tosses it to her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You know me so well.

NOAH

How many students this year?

VIOLET

Didn't get the chance to look. Last year was 404, but judging by the country's decreased interest in boarding schools, I'm guessing somewhere around 370.

Beat.

NOAH

So you have no idea.

VIOLET

No, not a clue.

They turn down a corridor.

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - WINDOW SEAT - DAY

Noah and Violet sit side by side on a large window seat, looking down at the entrance of the school.

PARENTS and KIDS fill the parking lot, suitcases and duffel bags galore.

Some goodbyes are emotional. Others are devoid of any emotion.

FRIENDS rush to each other and hug, reuniting after a long summer apart.

Standing proudly at the front of the school greeting parents and students is HEADMASTER FARROW (40), stern and frightening to students but charming to adults.

NOAH

If Chase is my roommate again, I think I might jump out the window.

VIOLET

He graduated last year.

NOAH

He *should* have graduated three years ago.

Violet rolls her eyes and takes another bite of her half eaten muffin.

Noah pulls out a piece of paper from his pocket.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Can I see your schedule?

Violet gestures towards her bag, and Noah digs around in it.

Violet keeps her eyes trained outside, taking everything in.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Um...

Violet looks back to see Noah holding a few crumpled leaves in his hand.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Is this for an art project or something?

Violet stares, speechless.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Violet?

VIOLET

Please ignore those.

Noah gives her a strange look, but does as she asks. He pulls out her schedule to compare his to hers.

NOAH

All but two. Not bad.

But Violet's not listening. She pushes her face as close to the window as she can, staring wide eyed.

Seeing her reaction, Noah looks back through the window.

VIOLET

I must be hallucinating.

Noah searches the crowd, and his face lights up. He spots FAITH SUN (15), positive, determined, and loyal, getting her suitcase out of a taxi.

NOAH

Faith must have gotten an earlier flight!

VIOLET

No, not her--

NOAH

I'll be back!

Noah rushes off. Violet watches him go and holds back an eye roll. She throws her muffin away in the trash can next to her, then looks back out the window.

It's not Faith Violet sees, but ASHTON FARROW (16), usually friendly, reliable, and somewhat sensitive, but now selfish, dark, and complex.

Violet can't look away as Ashton walks up to Headmaster Farrow, his father, a duffel bag thrown over his shoulder. He's dressed in a military school uniform.

Headmaster Farrow says something to him, and Ashton looks right up at Violet's viewing spot.

Violet shoves herself away from the window and ducks.

EXT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - FRONT STEPS - DAY

Ashton continues to look up at the, now empty, window.

HEADMASTER FARROW
 Something more important than our
 conversation?

Ashton pulls his eyes away.

ASHTON
 Sorry.

Headmaster Farrow continues to wave and smile at other parents, a smile plastered on his face as he speaks lowly to his son.

HEADMASTER FARROW
 (to Ashton)
 Can you imagine my embarrassment
 after that phone call?

ASHTON
 No, sir.

HEADMASTER FARROW
 My own son kicked out of my alma
 mater for starting a fight he
 couldn't even win.

Ashton fights to not react.

Headmaster Farrow nods at Faith as she walks up the steps with some of her things. Noah carries the rest.

HEADMASTER FARROW (CONT'D)
 Ms. Sun, welcome back. I hope your
 flight wasn't too bad?

FAITH
 Not at all. Only two layovers this
 time!

Noah doesn't even look at the Headmaster or Ashton, his eyes only on Faith as they continue their way up the steps.

HEADMASTER FARROW
 (to Ashton)
 If we find that 2 years in the
 academy wasn't enough, I have some
 great connections overseas that
 would be happy to straighten you
 out. Do I make myself clear?

The tension between them could be cut with a butter knife.

ASHTON

Crystal.

Headmaster Farrow nods, then turns back to other students and families.

Ashton looks up at the window again, but it's still empty. He stalks past his father and into the school.

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - 120 HALL - DAY

Violet walks through the hallway, unfazed by the BOYS moving into their dorms. She walks like it's her own house.

The boys however take quick notice of her and watch as she walks to Noah's room.

She peeks inside, but sees he's not there.

BOY

You lost?

Violet turns to face the BOY. He's smirking, very clearly amused.

BOY (CONT'D)

What dorm are you in? I can take you there.

She looks him up and down, then straight in the eye.

VIOLET

You must be new.

With that, Violet brushes past the boy and walks out of the hall.

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - 110 HALL - DAY

Violet peeks into the open doors, trying not to touch other GIRLS moving into their dorms.

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - OUTSIDE DORM 113 - DAY

Violet peeks inside her own dorm, not really looking, and moves past it. She backtracks a moment later and steps inside.

INT. BRONSON PREPARATORY ACADEMY - DORM 113 - DAY

Noah helps Faith settle her stuff into the top bunk of the, usually empty, bunkbed.

VIOLET
What's going on?

Faith and Noah turn around. Faith lights up.

FAITH
Violet, it's so good to see you!

She goes to hug Violet, then pulls back at the last second.

FAITH (CONT'D)
Sorry, I forget you're not a hugger. How was your summer?

VIOLET
The same as it always is. What are you doing in my room?

FAITH
This is my room assignment this year.

VIOLET
113?

Faith checks her piece of paper and shows it to Violet.

FAITH
113.

Violet takes the paper from her and stares at it.

VIOLET
And they...they gave this to you when?

FAITH
It was in my email a few days ago, and then in the papers they gave me at registration. Is something wrong? I didn't take your bed, did I?

Violet shoots Noah a look, who shrugs. Violet attempts to regulate her emotions.

VIOLET
Well, it's just that--

HANNAH (O.S.)
Excuse me?

Violet, Faith, and Noah turn to see HANNAH MURPHY (16),
cheerful, clever, and seemingly trustworthy, at the door.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Is this room 113?

VIOLET
Unfortunately.

END OF ACT 1