

THE PROTECTORS OF THE WOOD ADVENTURE SERIES

[Based on the Protectors of the Wood book series](#)

[Written by John KixMiller](#)

[© 2022 All Rights Reserved](#)

[@protectorsofthewood](#)

Join our story of misfit teenagers as they struggle to save the world from climate change.

Episode #145: The Festival Continues

Abby: Gaby

Wilma Owens: Edward

Rev. Tuck: Joe

Narrator: John

Narrator: Abby was fascinated by the soccer ball juggling exhibition that Phoebe put together in the churchyard. She noticed that Sulay was filming the entire show. Abby was curious about Sulay and watched her as the soccer performance ended. Shannon, Nico, Geo, and others grouped around her to watch the play-back of the video. They all seemed to be close friends.

Phoebe gathered all the teens together for a group photo, and then put the youngest children on the field, mostly the group that Abby had led on her bird watching activity. They were ecstatic to get their time to play, and their parents were thrilled to see them. Abby was thinking:

Abby: Wow, this is quite amazing! Look at these happy kids. And the activity is mostly run by teens!

Narrator: Reverend Tuck was watching the activity with great interest.

Reverend Tuck: Let me thank everyone for such a wonderful soccer exhibition! And I want to invite everyone to stay and finish up the food and the coolers of cold water!

Narrator: Both adults and children gathered around Sulay to look at the stills and videos on her camera.

Various parent voices:

Parent #1: I'd like to order four copies of that one!

Parent #2: Please, the whole video for me. Six copies of my daughter! The whole game.

Parent #3: I'll take five copies of the group photo, that one there!

Narrator: Abby felt a touch on her shoulder and turned around to see the woman who had joined their bird watching activity.

Wilma Owens: Abby, I'm Wilma Owens. I've heard a lot about you.

Abby: I hope it's all good news.

Narrator: Abby had a sinking feeling, assuming that this wealthy trustee had heard gossip and rumors that were negative, to say the least. Wilma watched Abby's expression and give her a smile.

Wilma: Don't worry about me. I believe only what I see for myself. Nice going, Abby, good job today.

Narrator: Abby was struck by the woman's odd manner, both warm and cold at the same time. She knew that Wilma must be connected to the extraordinarily wealthy Owens clan, a family that held vast amounts of real estate in the Half Moon Valley, and owned Owen's Apples, the largest apple business in the state. Abby's father had worked for them for decades. Wilma noticed Abby's perceptive glance and waited silently until Abby became embarrassed and looked away.

Abby: Oh...your Wilma Owens, my father mentioned you.

Wilma: Yes, I'm the older sister of Big Bill Owens. I know your father used to work for us.

Narrator: Abby looked up at her with mixed feelings. She was thinking:

Abby: Yeah, you're the one who took half my father's pension away after he had a heart attack.

Narrator: Abby could not help but see the odd expression on the woman's face, as if she expected – with great sorrow – to be hated and feared. Abby wondered if she and Wilma had something in common.

Wilma: I don't mean to keep you from your responsibilities. I just want to ask your permission to visit your bird watcher's path with a few others. Some of my closest friends will be delighted. I can't wait to tell them we saw a great gray owl. You probably don't know how rare they are. And in our own churchyard! How did you think of such a thing? Really quite remarkable.

Abby: The young children wanted it. That's why we made it like this. And I'm thrilled that you want to bring your friends. This is all I hoped for.

Wilma: I see you're raising children the right way.

Narrator: Wilma tipped her hat with a little bow.

Wilma: My compliments!

Narrator: Abby was so surprised she didn't know what to do, and Wilma turned away in embarrassment, walking alone toward the gate. Abby was thinking:

Abby: What a shock! She's as sensitive and awkward as I am.

Narrator: Abby stood lost in thought for a minute, and then turned to the clean-up chores going on around her.

Abby: Oh my god! There's Jeremy! He hasn't even said hello to me. But then, I haven't said hello to him either, and probably won't try. It's all my own fault. My rare effort to have some real fun was a disaster. Jeremy promised to deliver the extra bag of vegetables... We had so much fun together the other night. I almost kissed him, he turned his head, and I missed his lips and kissed his cheek. If I could only calm down and act normal, everything would be all right. But I just can't do that.

Narrator: Abby felt awkward and didn't know what to do, she decided to clean the churchyard by herself. She went through the motions of cleaning up, walking around picking up paper plates and cups and napkins, lemon cuke skins and peach pits. Her friends were also cleaning up and didn't say hi to her. She felt like a ghost.

She saw Reverend Tuck, Fred and Chester Peterson, Tom Winkle, Dr. Bear, and Terrence Williams all conferring together under a maple tree. Phoebe, Jeremy, Sara, Eddie, and Shannon were all talking near the side door. No one looked her way. In disgust and sorrow, she turned back to her cottage and lay down in the stifling heat.