THE PROTECTORS OF THE WOOD ADVENTURE SERIES

Based on the Protectors of the Wood Book Series
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Join our story of misfit teenagers as they struggle to save the world from climate change.

Book #4: Abby and Wendy

Episode #210: The Plan for Abby's Escape

Narrator: Among the crowd of reporters trying to interview Abby at the churchyard gate, Abby was intrigued by an older, quiet reporter who said,

Barry: Can I have one question? I'm not your enemy, you know.

Narrator: There was something in his voice that Abby found irresistible, and she turned back to listen.

Barry: I'm Barry Lipton, and this is Zoe Collins. We're from the River City News.

Narrator: The rest of the reporters crowded around in silence, hoping to record anything Abby might say. She told Phoebe, Sulay, and Nico to wait at the bench under the maple trees and turned back to Barry and Zoe.

Abby: Okay, one question. Thanks for being so polite.

Narrator: Zoe, a young woman probably in her mid-twenties, gently moved closer to Abby, and said:

Zoe: We're really interested in what you're doing, but we don't understand it. Can you help us report this story accurately? I know some people take a negative attitude and twist events to look bad, but it won't help you to avoid even sympathetic reporters.

Narrator: Abby came closer to avoid raising her voice.

Abby: Right now, I'm just trying to make a living, helping the church and working with children. I'm trying to be normal, but it's very hard under these circumstances. I'd be happy to speak more freely, but I can't have people following me around, interrupting my jobs, my time off… it gets crazy. If everyone would be nicer I would be happy to talk.

Zoe: Please, take this opportunity to say whatever you like.

Abby: I'm not even twenty years old yet. I haven't been to college. I need to work to live. But I also want to have some influence in this world. I want to work with people to make things better. Let me ask you, does our world look dangerous, fragile, basically in a lot of trouble these days?

Zoe: Yes, absolutely, we can't agree more. But what kinds of things are you doing to make it better? What do you recommend?

Abby: I tried to… I tried to begin talking about that in the Evansville Record interview. We want to help the church change with the times, involve young people, raise money, talk in an honest way about climate change, and find a path forward to live with nature and not against nature. But these things are hard to do without dealing with the way we see the world, our purpose here, our attitudes toward the earth and the future and each other. Are the earth and our life here basically good? Is it our responsibility to pass on a bright future to the next generation? Do we care how we treat our home and the millions of life forms that live here too? Is the earth holy, sacred, or is everything sacred only somewhere else, up in heaven for instance? Are we part of a larger purpose that we can understand and talk about? These questions have to be raised if we are to heal the terrible wounds and fears and destructive behavior in our world today. I know this sounds trite, maybe too obvious to be interesting…

Narrator: Abby paused.

Zoe: No, no, it's very interesting. Sara Williams has promised her audience another interview with you. Could you allow Barry and I to be there and represent River City and the questions of our public?

Abby: I'd have to think about it. I'm not absolutely sure I'll do another interview, but I'd be happy to take your card and get back to you.

Narrator: About a dozen hands suddenly reached out with cards, and she took them all.

Abby: I'll do my best to set something up. Hi My friends and I don't mean to favor anyone, but you can understand, we've been through some very frightening experiences. We have responsibilities. We all want to be treated with respect, not viewed as devils. Please help us!

Narrator: Abby realized that Phoebe, Sulay and Nico were kneeling around her, taking pictures. Sulay had her fancy video camera. Shouted questions continued for about a minute, and then Officer Harley tried to disperse the crowd. Two reporters insisted on their right to stand there on the sidewalk, and Officer Harley stayed at the gate. Abby sat on the grass just in front of the bench, facing her three friends. They were now far enough from the street to speak softly and not be heard.

Sulay: Go Abby! Nice job.

Narrator: Yeah, added Phoebe. You might have won a few friends among that group. We need friends.

Nico: And we got good pictures too. If any of them get nasty we know who they are.

Abby: I don't think this crowd was nasty. They're just trying to do their job. Our real enemies are not these people, and if they get aggressive it's just pressure from their bosses. But I'm still worried about stalkers, and maybe a reporter or two who wants a scoop of some kind. And I'm afraid I've turned their attention to all of you now. I shouldn't have done that.

Sulay: Oh… I'm glad you reminded me. We had reporters in our store today. It was all right. My father handled them, and they bought stuff. And we've already got hostile trolls messaging our website. We ignore them.

Narrator: Abby took a deep breath.

Abby: I'm afraid for all of us. And, I'm not sure how to get out of town on Friday.

Phoebe: Stephanie told me I'm going with you!

Narrator: Phoebe tried hard to keep her voice down.

Phoebe: Give us the details. What's the plan?

Abby: I need help.

Nico: I hope so. The last couple of days have been boring. What can we do?

Narrator: Abby took a quick look around and was satisfied that no one was nearby.

Abby: On Friday afternoon – 5PM to be exact – Phoebe and I need to meet a boat on the north side of the Half Moon just beyond Cemetery Bridge. We must not be photographed or bothered. We need a clean get-away.

Phoebe: Oh I can't wait!

Sulay: But Abby, your idea might be a little shaky.

Abby: You're right. My idea is shaky. I was thinking of going out the door between the church and the old school building to Old Stone Road and crossing the street to Stable Lane. Part way down, almost opposite the toy store and Sammy's, there's a gap between the buildings on the left across Marie Place. Then if you bend right there's trees along the river to the Cemetery Bridge. I know the cemetery is fenced in, but the water has gone down, and Phoebe and I can walk under the bridge to the far side. We should get there exactly at five.

Narrator: The group struggled to finish a plan that would allow Abby's 'clean get-away', no matter what stalkers might be observing the churchyard. Phoebe made notes, and finally said,

Phoebe: Let's see if I've got this right. At 4:40 pm, Sulay leaves Sammy's front door and walks up to the corner of Bridge Avenue and Old Stone Road. Nico leaves by the back door and waits at the alley outside the back wall of the churchyard. If they spot anything dangerous or suspicious afoot, they walk past the wrought iron door from Old Stone road to the churchyard. Abby will be waiting there and can be warned with a quick signal.

A slight shake of the head will do. If there's no warning Abby departs at 5:00. Meanwhile, I stand on the back steps of the toy store and signal Abby if the coast is clear. If all is well Phoebe follows Abby at a distance and warns her if we're followed.

The plan depends on timing. We can't have Sulay or Nico or me loitering around for twenty minutes looking nervous. We must walk casually to our spots at 4:40, take one quick look, and notify Abby or not. By 4:45 Abby must step out onto Old Stone Road and cross immediately.

Narrator: Nico and Sulay looked at each other with raised eyebrows and nodded to each other.

Sulay: We have the same idea. If Abby is followed, we'll go after the stalker and take pictures. They get scared when we take pictures now. Some of those guys probably lost their stalker jobs once their faces started getting shared all over.

Narrator: Phoebe agreed.

Phoebe: It looks good to me. Nico?

Nico: We got it. Perfect. It's like a plan for a free kick in soccer. Everyone moves in sync. At least Abby will get away free, and probably Phoebe too.

Phoebe: If I'm not there, Abby, just go. Don't wait. I can get a ride Saturday morning.

Abby: I'm grateful. This is looking really important. We'll talk again in Evansville.

Narrator: They slapped hands and parted in high spirits. The sidewalk was clear. Abby returned to her cottage and read Lluvia's note over and over.