

The Protectors of the Wood Adventure Series!

Based on the Protectors of the Wood book series

Written by John KixMiller

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@protectorsofthewood

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

Episode #131: In the Darkness, Part II

Narrator: As the half-moon began to sink in the west, the darkness became overwhelming. There were no more shadows, almost nothing was visible. Even their faces were hard to see as they sat on the leaves surrounded by the tall hedges and the trees. George was getting Abby up to date on the recent news from their group. He described the efforts of the young teens to shield Abby from the stalkers.

George: According to Phoebe, two of them – Nico and Geo – saved us at the back door the night of the concert. These kids are out for adventure, and they're smart. And this new girl has the best camera ever. She's a better photographer than me, and might be still in high school.

Abby: Wow... This is a whole new world. So things are really good.

George: Good in some ways. The band is getting opportunities, our whole project is growing. I'm proud of it, except... I'm not happy. This business of being a spy and doing everything in secret is exciting, and I've been lucky so far. But what I really want to do is go to your cottage and trade songs on the guitar. I want to hear you play.

Abby (loud whisper): George! Think about your message to me tonight. And my cottage is probably bugged for sound. Someone broke into the back window last night while I was away.

George: What??

Narrator: He shook his head.

George: You know, I'm still amazed that they care so much. How did we get to be so important?

Abby: The trip to Rivergate opened my eyes. I learned a lot. You've got to hear the whole story. They're counting on you to stir up enthusiasm. And your spy info is the only inside story we've got. Your news tonight might save us all from a terrible defeat. This trustee election coming up is a make or break thing. Everything changes.

Narrator: George sat in the darkness without moving. The crickets droned. Abby could not read his face. Suddenly the owl hooted again and again.

Abby: Listen. It's the same owl. Our friend in the darkness.

Sound: Whoo... hooo... Whoo hoo...

Narrator: Abby reached out and touched his arm.

Abby: Look, George, I'm wrong to put pressure on you, and I shouldn't have mentioned the trustee business. Being a spy must be unbearable. You're making the biggest sacrifice. I couldn't possibly handle what you're doing, and I'll support you one-hundred percent in backing out of it. In fact I think you should quit. They're clever and nasty. They're devious and powerful, and take revenge.

Narrator: George smiled in a final ray of moonlight.

George: I'm like you. I'm hardly going to sleep this week. We're going to practice like fiends, work on songs until we're ready to drop. And we're performing in about a week. We'll do our share and thrill people. I've got new songs. Eddy wants to join us full time, and Ishmael and Isaiah are fantastic. We're better than we were before. I just wish you could be a part of it.

Abby: I am a part of it, but there are major down sides I have to accept. It takes a lot of sacrifice to do this job, for both of us. Sometimes I think it's too much.

Narrator: Abby felt more at ease, more friendly, and her trust level with George went up a notch. She decided to take a risk.

Abby: Neither of us can have any sort of normal life. I've learned our phones might be tapped. I'm not even allowed to carry one. I don't know how I'm going to stay in touch with people. The Protectors have all sorts of rules to maintain our secrets. We have to act as if we're in public at all times. Not that privacy has done much good for me in the past. I'm not sure how much you've heard, but I'll confess that having a boyfriend has always been a disaster for me. I'm jinxed. I bring pain and sorrow. Nothing ever comes out right.

George: I don't care about your past. I don't want to know. But I do get the message. There's nothing to do except keep on track. I'm writing songs, making money, and finding out stuff left and right. It is kind of lonely though. I hardly talk to anyone the way we're talking now, and this spy business... it's hard to live in two worlds at once.

Abby: Quit the spy job. You can succeed anywhere you want.

George: Maybe. But tell the truth now: Am I right in thinking that my friends – like you, for instance – really, really need me to stick with it? For example, check this out. See what you think.

Narrator: George paused for a little suspense, and then whispered:

George: I overheard a few words from a discussion in Peabody's office yesterday. Just a loud question, full of enthusiasm – probably said to Morphy – in Peabody's shrill voice. 'You'd make an offer for the churchyard?' That's all I could catch. Does that mean what it seems to mean?

Abby: Oh... God help us.

Narrator: Abby blinked in shock, seeing nothing. All the wind went out of her sails. She felt adrift, helpless.

Abby: So that's what they're cooking up. I knew they'd attack, but I never thought of that. We're so vulnerable!

Narrator: She sat in silence, pulling herself back together, feeling her energy rebound with more ferocity than she knew she had. George waited.

Abby: George, you're a genius! You might save us all! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

George: See how it is? It seems like things never work out, but then another path opens up. At least I can help my friends.

Abby: I'm so glad we're talking. I'm already planning tomorrow.

Narrator: George could not stop smiling.

George: One more thing.

Narrator: He reached into his pocket, pulled out a business card, and handed it to Abby.

George: I don't think you can read it in this light, but check it out when you're home. The main stalker gave it to me. They actually seem to think I'm on their side. I can hardly believe it! But they're paying me a lot. I'm finally going to get my own apartment. They probably think they've bought me, but it still amazes me.

Abby: It only works so long as we don't get caught... George... be careful.

Narrator: She reached out and held his hand.

Abby: Please... we all love you. Quit being a spy and just be yourself! We're with you.

George: I'll think about it. But what good would it do? We're soldiers, remember? I should be going. I learned it from you. I'm invisible, silent as a black cat.

Narrator: He stood up. Abby followed him down the path to the iron door, and unlocked it.

Abby: (very low voice) See you tomorrow night.

Narrator: They hugged close and moved to kiss each other on the cheek, but in the dark, ended up kissing on the lips, just for a second. George turned and walked away.