

Lost in the Woods

By Stephen Murray

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STORY OF THE PLAY

A group of students enrolled in a technology-free wilderness camp find themselves lost in the middle of the woods. As darkness falls, a mysterious counselor that wasn't introduced at orientation finds the students and sets up camp with them. Around the campfire, the students and counselor share ghost stories and tales of the mysterious creatures of the forest like sasquatch and the chupacabra. But not all creatures are big and scary. Gnomes also appear and explain that they are guardians of the woods. Will the campers ever get out of the woods? When the real counselors finally locate the kids and everyone leaves, the creatures can celebrate.

SETTING

All action takes place in a North American forest. A single set or backdrop.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 w, 7 flexible, ensemble of 8 or more)

RANGER RANDY / MIRANDA LUPO: Achieved full ranger status in the Backwoods Rangers by earning all 273 merit badges. Is actually a werewolf living in the woods who was once a camp counselor, presumed dead in 1985.

MINDY: (w) A camper. Smart, with some leadership qualities.

BELLA: (w) A camper, always hungry, very helpful.

KASI: (w) A camper. Tends to get worried and homesick. Carries a teddy bear with her.

MARIOLA: (w) A camper. Daring and adventurous. Knows about the chupacabra.

JOY / ROY: A camper, obsessed with chopping down a tree.

NICKY: A camper who can be a bit reckless.

TERRY: A camper obsessed with finding Bigfoot.

JAYDEN: A camper who is skeptical of many things.

RIVER: A camper who is somewhat of a hippie child.

SASSY: (w) A Lady Sasquatch. Performed with a puppet or an actor in a full bigfoot costume.

MRS. REED: (w) Director of Camp Boondocks.

FRANCIS / FRANCES: Camp counselor, a bit absent-minded.

ADA: (w) Camp counselor, technological “genius” ... sort of.

GNOMES 1 - 8: Fantasy characters from the woods.

CREATURES OF THE WOODS: Animals of the forest. Can be puppets or actors in costumes.

NIGHTMARE CHARACTERS: A variety of ghouls, witches, ghosts, and goblins.

This show is designed to be flexible. Many roles can be performed by male or female actors. Just adjust with the appropriate pronoun. This show can be adapted to suit large and small casts. If you have a small cast, a group of performers can play multiple roles such as Gnomes and Scary Characters. The actors playing Mrs. Reed, Ada, and Francis can be included in some of that fun as well.

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(AT RISE: The scene is a North American forest. SFX: of forest noises such as animal calls and insects. The CREATURES OF THE WOODS take the stage and wander about until they notice humans approaching. The creatures disperse as a group of young teenage CAMPERS enter. Many are wearing t-shirts that read "CAMP BOONDOCKS." There is no adult with them. They are lost. The noises of the forest subside.)

MINDY: *(Spoken with confidence as if she knows where to go.)* Left!!

(ALL move left, then stop.)

TERRY: Right!

(ALL move right, then stop.)

NICKY: North!

(ALL scatter in different directions, pause, and then look at each other.)

ALL: LOST!

RIVER: No technology. No map. No clue.

MARIOLA: Are we going in circles?

JOY/ROY: I think I've seen that tree before.

JAYDEN: It's a tree. You can tell them apart?

MINDY: Each one is unique.

TERRY: That's right. All we need to do is find the one that gets us back.

KASI: We're doomed.

MARIOLA: We're lost.

RIVER: What happened to our counselor, Francis?

JOY/ROY: Who cares. Francis was boring.

TERRY: Yes, and he was keeping us away from the more interesting parts of the forest.

JAYDEN: What do you mean, "interesting"?

TERRY: You know. The parts of the forest with wildlife and legendary creatures like Bigfoot.

JAYDEN: Bigfoot?

TERRY: Yes, Bigfoot, also known as Sasquatch, the Honey Island Swamp Monster, the Ohio Grassman, and the Wood Booger.

KASI: The Wood Booger sounds disgusting!

TERRY: This is Ground Zero for Bigfoot sightings, Werewolf sightings, and UFO sightings!

NICKY: I think I just had a bonehead sighting.

(Other CAMPERS laugh.)

TERRY: Come on, don't you want a little adventure? Or would you prefer another lecture about ferns by Francis?

RIVER: At least Francis knew the way back to camp.

BELLA: I'm hungry.

MINDY: Some trees are edible.

BELLA: Oh yeah? Which ones?

MINDY: I'm not sure.

JAYDEN: And some are poisonous.

BELLA: Oh yeah? Which ones?

MINDY: I'm not sure.

KASI: We're doomed.

NICKY: *(With sudden intensity.)* Okay. It is time for action. I say we burn down the forest. Get these trees out of the way so we can see where we're going.

RIVER: Are you insane?

NICKY: Maybe I am... and maybe I am!

KASI: That seems a bit extreme.

MINDY: That's a bit over the top, Nicky, but a fire isn't a bad idea.

NICKY: Thank you, Mindy. You see! Mindy thinks it's a good idea.

TERRY: I think a small fire might be okay.

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JAYDEN: (*Poking fun at Terry.*) As long as it doesn't scare your friend, Bigfoot.

MARIOLA: Okay, who knows how to make a fire?

JAYDEN: Mindy, you're our Velma. How do we make fire?

MINDY: I'm your Velma?

JAYDEN: Velma, from *Scooby-Doo*. The smart one. The one with the answers.

MINDY: Thanks, I think. I'm no Velma.

JOY/ROY: Can I be Fred? I'd look great in an ascot.

RIVER: I want to be Shaggy.

MARIOLA: I'll be Daphne.

KASI: I want to be Daphne.

TERRY: Nobody needs to be Daphne. We need to get back to the camp.

BELLA: If Camp Boondocks let us have cell phones out here, I could use GPS to get us back.

MINDY: The whole point of the camp was to have us survive without technology.

TERRY: (*Sarcastically.*) Thanks a lot, Mom and Dad!

JOY/ROY: You'd think they'd at least let us have a compass.

MARIOLA: What was the thing about the sun?

KASI: Rises in the east...

ALL: (*Murmuring reply.*) ...sets in the west.

JAYDEN: I can't see the sun. It's cloudy and there are a bunch of trees.

TERRY: No problem. As soon as it's dark, we can navigate with the stars. And there's a full moon tonight.

JAYDEN: Did I mention that it's cloudy?

KASI: We're doomed!

MINDY: Wait a minute. I remember something about moss on the trees.

RIVER: It grows on the north side.

MINDY: Then we need to find some mossy trees! Come on!

(The CAMPERS leave the stage. Three camp counselors, MRS. REED, FRANCIS, and ADA, enter.)

MRS. REED: Francis, explain to me again how you lost nine campers!

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FRANCIS: We were doing a simple team-building activity. A game of hide and seek. They just happen to be really good at it.

MRS. REED: But all nine in your group?

ADA: I think you're the one who got lost, Francis.

FRANCIS: Obviously not, Ada, since I am here with you right now.

(ADA and FRANCIS start arguing.)

ADA: Maybe you should go back into the woods and find them!

FRANCIS: Why don't you get lost!

(THEY continue arguing until MRS. REED interrupts them.)

MRS. REED: Ada! Francis! Stop your bickering. This is a very serious problem. Francis, ordinarily this would be grounds for dismissal. However, you are my nephew. My sister and mother would never forgive me.

FRANCIS: Sorry, Auntie.

MRS. REED: Francis, as my employee, you are to address me as Mrs. Reed.

FRANCIS: Yes, Mrs. Reed.

MRS. REED: We need to search for these campers.

ADA: *(Holding a paper map.)* Mrs. Reed, I have a map of the whole area. If they stay within the boundaries of the state park they will be fine. Beyond the boundary is some dangerous territory.

FRANCIS: *(Pointing to a spot on the map.)* I have heard about werewolf sightings over there. I keep the campers away from that area.

ADA: Francis, there is no scientific evidence of the existence of werewolves. But there are plenty of genuine dangers those campers face.

MRS. REED: Thank you, Ada. In the 30 years that I have run Camp Boondocks, we have had a perfect safety record.

FRANCIS: You run a tight ship, Mrs. Reed.

MRS. REED: Apparently not tight enough. Losing nine campers is serious business.

FRANCIS: I'm really sorry about that.

MRS. REED: It's hard enough convincing parents to send their kids to our camp with all that ridiculous folklore about creatures of the night.

ADA: But hasn't the camp always been one of the safest in the country?

MRS. REED: Yes. Safety has been our biggest selling point. However, back in the 1980s when I was a camper here, there was a horrible tragedy. Something too gruesome to even mention. I became a counselor here, then moved up the ranks, and became the director. My reputation is at stake with these lost children!

ADA: I know you have a lot of pride in this camp, especially how you use no technology. However, Mrs. Reed. I think in this case, technology might be the key to finding the lost campers.

FRANCIS: What are you going to do, Ada? Ask Siri to find the lost kids?

ADA: I wish it were that simple.

MRS. REED: It is true I believe people should learn to survive in the woods without modern gadgets. But we are in an emergency situation. I will allow technology to find those campers.

ADA: Great! Let's head back to the van. I have some things there that will help us.

(MRS. REED, ADA, and FRANCIS exit. THE CAMPERS re-enter.)

JAYDEN: Hundreds of trees and no moss!

TERRY: I wonder if Bigfoot eats moss. I bet that's why we didn't find any!

MINDY: We should keep looking.

BELLA: Maybe if we just stay in one spot Francis will find us.

KASI: Francis spent 15 minutes trying to find his own backpack, and he was wearing it!

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RIVER: And that was the worst game of hide and seek ever!

(SFX: Strange growling noises are heard coming from offstage.)

JOY/ROY: Did anyone else hear that?

NICKY: You mean the growling, hungry, murder-y sound?

JOY/ROY: Yeah, that.

NICKY: No, I didn't hear it.

TERRY: You know what I'm thinking....

ALL OTHER CAMPERS: Be quiet, Terry!

(The LIGHTS dim. SFX: Mysterious voices are heard offstage. No specific words can be heard. It should just be spooky. The CAMPERS are getting nervous.)

MARIOLA: Something moved over there!

NICKY: Maybe it was that Chucky doll, or the creepy Megan doll. Maybe it's both of them having a creepy doll convention.

MINDY: Knock it off, Nicky.

RIVER: A bear?

JAYDEN: Are those eyes?

(From the shadows emerge several NIGHTMARE CHARACTERS. Monsters, witches, goblins, even characters from horror movies. They are figments of the campers' imaginations. They surround and terrorize the campers, but do not make physical contact with them.)

NIGHTMARE CHARACTERS: Oooo! Get out! Get out! Get out of the woods! Get out! Get out! Get out of the woods!

JOY/ROY: What's happening?

KASI: Is this real?

(The CAMPERS scream.)

NIGHTMARE CHARACTERS: Oooo! Get out! Get out! Get out of the woods! Get out! Get out! Get out of the woods!

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(The NIGHTMARE CHARACTERS disperse and exit, leaving the CAMPERS alone and terrified on stage.)

NICKY: Let's get out of here!

(The CAMPERS run offstage. ADA and MRS. REED enter. Ada is carrying a remote-control device and a small electronic tablet.)

MRS. REED: I don't see how your little toy helicopter is going to help, Ada.

ADA: This isn't a toy, Mrs. Reed. This is an expensive, sophisticated drone with a video camera. I'll be able to search acres of forest in much less time.

(FRANCIS enters.)

FRANCIS: It's all set and ready to fly. Can I be the pilot?

ADA: I'll fly the drone, Francis. You run the monitor and let me know if you see anything. *(ADA hands the tablet to FRANCIS.)*

MRS. REED: I hope this works.

ADA: Ignition! Lift off!

(SFX: a drone flying off. The ACTORS fix their gaze on the imaginary spot of the drone. Their heads should move together as they look in the same direction.)

FRANCIS: *(Indicating the viewscreen of the tablet.)* Look Mrs. Reed, there we are.

MRS. REED: Oh my, it's like a little television show. That's us! *(SHE waves to the sky.)*

FRANCIS: Hey, there's my backpack! I was wearing it the whole time!

ADA: Okay, now I will begin the search pattern.

MRS. REED: Look, there's Lake Lupo! Named for... well, you know the story.

FRANCIS: Yes, ma'am.

End of Freeview

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