

SOMETHING IN THE WATER

By

?

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FADE IN:

EXT. SISKIYOU NATIONAL FOREST, OREGON - DAY

A lush green canopy of Douglas and White Fir trees perfectly backlit by shafts of early morning sunlight. Three figures emerge through a mist pushing bicycles along a dirt path.

WESLEY 12, dark hair, slight build, a confident bearing and intelligent eyes. ROSE, 11, pretty, despite a red, pulpy, burn which covers one side of her face.

DWIGHT, 14 brings up the rear. A swagger and smirk suggest cockiness. Crew cut, camouflage pants, and a muscle T-shirt, though, he's more flab than muscle.

All three suddenly stop. In a clearing ahead a young COUPLE in their 20s, naked and entwined, bang away at each other. Dwights mouth drops open, as does Wesley's. He quickly shields his sister's eyes. Dwight in turn covers Wesley's.

The young woman grabs at her clothes, before giving her unsuspecting audience an eyeful of her voluptuous assets.

CHETCO RIVER - LATER

Dwight, now leading, peers down through a breathtaking drop to the whitewater below. He focuses on a large rock shelf gives Wesley a knowing look.

WESLEY

No way.

DWIGHT

Aww, c'mon, you're fucking kidding me, right? My Grandma could jump that one with a stick up her ass.

WESLEY

A pleasant image.

Wesley and Rose exchange a grin, smile good naturedly.

ROSE

You're not supposed to swear.

DWIGHT

Why the fuck not?

Rose is about to answer but Wesley gestures not to.

Dwight still surveys the jump.

DWIGHT

Well, I say we're doing it.

WESLEY

I dunno, that's a long way.

Dwight shoots Wesley a disparaging look, rolls his eyes.

DWIGHT

Well that's good isn't it? Maybe you'll grow a pair.

ROSE

What about our bikes?

WESLEY

We ain't doing it, sis.

DWIGHT

The bikes'll be fine, no-one but us and the bugs around.

As they trek down to the spot, Dwight's gaze lingers a bit too long on Rose's cheek.

DWIGHT

What happened to your face, kid?

Rose hesitates, unable to find her voice.

WESLEY

None of your business.

Dwight waves his hand mock surrender, then pats Wesley a bit too hard on the back, chuckles.

DWIGHT

Hey, big man, you're already growing a pair. Good to see.

Wesley blushes beet red as Dwight pulls him into a bear-hug while Wesley struggles to free himself, all in vain.

ROSE

It was boiling water... when I was little...so, I don't remember it.

Dwight lets Wesley go and both of them stare at Rose.

Rose looks towards the rock shelf.

ROSE

I'll do it if you two will.

DWIGHT

Well, you got yourself a deal,
freckles.

WESLEY

It's too far. We won't make it.

ROSE

We've jumped further before.

Wesley makes a 'whose side are you on' face at Rose.

DWIGHT

That's the attitude. Wes, you stay
here and look after the bikes if
you like. Me and your sis will
probably be back before sunset.

Before he can answer Rose turns, runs, launches herself off
the bank clear across to the rock on the other side.

DWIGHT

(hollering into the
valley)

Yeeha!

Dwight now takes his mark. A fast but clumsy run-up he
launches himself, lands less with grace - more with a thump.

With his back to them Wesley sneaks out his inhaler - takes a
deep puff. Finally, he takes his run up, leaps into the
air...

...landing just short he grazes his hands, squeals as one leg
slips in the water. Dwight and Rose grab an arm each, haul
him out. Dwight sniggers as Wesley's face reddens.

DWIGHT

Oh dear. Nearly, little man. But
not quite. That may well be the
story of your life.

LATER

Wesley sits beside a 'tipi' fire drying his shoe and sock.
Nearby Rose watches Dwight roll a cigarette with fascination.

WESLEY

Don't give her any.

DWIGHT

As if! Okay, what's next...

Dwight lights up as he focuses on a high rock ledge above.

WESLEY

No way.

Dwight points to the left and an even steeper bank. He sets off walking.

DWIGHT

... 'cause so far, if this is all that passes as fun in the state of Oregon ... not counting those delicious melons we saw earlier...

EXT. DEVIL'S STAIRCASE TRAIL - DAY

A jaw-dropping chasm, jagged rocks. Below sunlight glances off the river-spray and rainbow colours refract from its surface. All three stand at the precipice.

DWIGHT

Hmm, that's maybe four foot across. Nothin' really. On the ground you wouldn't give it a second thought.

Dwight raps a knuckle to his head.

DWIGHT

The fear is all up here, see?

WESLEY

But we're not on the ground, are we, Dwight? Far from it.

Wesley picks up a stone. Drops it. The three of them peer over the edge to watch it fall into the rolling water below.

DWIGHT

Water'd probably cushion the blow...

WESLEY

Okay. Let's see you put your balls where your mouth is.

Dwight tries to make sense of what Wesley's just said, chuckles.

Rose glances at her brother; a look she's not seen before - brave, stubborn. He jumps to his feet...

Wesley can barely hear over the water. He strips off his shoes and socks. Rose protests, waves her arms to say no. She sees a head burst through the surface of the water -

ROSE

Look. There is he is!

She points to Dwight as he throws a hand up in the air, opens his mouth for air but the current drags him under once more. Downstream he goes, head bobbing to the surface. They follow him to a fork in the river where he's ensnared.

Skunkweed and vines wrapped around his contorted face and bloody skull. Yet still, a hand valiantly flies up above the water.

Wesley races to him once more, grabs a branch from the forest floor to try to hook Dwight's belt loop, but the body releases instead, taken with the current down the narrow fast flowing fork. Rose screams. Wes shouts at her to stay put.

CAVE ENTRANCE

Wesley reaches the entrance. Drenched in sweat, nasty cuts marr his face and blood flows from a gash on his thigh. He stares down at the water with fear.

He glances up to see Rose approach.

WESLEY

I told you to stay put.

ROSE

I found a narrow bit. I jumped.

WESLEY

Jesus, Rose. You could've...

ROSE

Stop swearing.

They stare at the fast flowing water.

ROSE

Is he down there?

Wesley nods.

ROSE

What are we gonna do?

For few seconds Wesley remains still at the water's edge. Rose's expression turns to fear as she sees Wesley rap his knuckles against his head and fall into the water.

ROSE

No...

He disappears into the cave.

RIVERBANK UPSTREAM

Rose stands stock still, her arms pressed to her sides. She squeezes her eyes shut.

ROSE

It'll be okay... It'll be okay...

SOMETIME LATER

Rose stands exactly as before. A hand taps her on the shoulder and she whirls around in panic. Wesley, soaking wet and now without a scratch. They hug each other tightly.

ROSE

I thought you were never coming back.

WESLEY

You and me both, little sis.

ROSE

Where were you?

WESLEY

I don't know, down some hole and in a cave. Went in one way and came out over there.

He points to the two spots. Takes her hand leads her away.

ROSE

Where are we going?

AT THEIR BIKES:

Wesley's hands grip Rose's shoulders.

WESLEY

We've got to get our story straight, okay?

Rose nods, stares in a daze at Dwight's bike. Wesley shakes her a little. Rose nods, as Wesley throw Dwight's bike into the bushes.

INT. HITCHEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A middle class living room, clean, neat and tidy and dull.

SHERIFF HENRY TATE (50), lean, tall and grey, his hat in his hands. His eyes wander from the family pictures of Wesley and Rose on the mantlepice to the ornaments on every surface.

THERESA HITCHENS (40) Prim, proper, hairstyle from the 1960s, enters with two mugs of coffee. A tight smile.

THERESA

I take it this is about Dwight.
Still hasn't turned up? Poor boy.

HENRY

Sadly no, Mrs. Hitchens.

THERESA

I spoke to my sister on the phone
yesterday. He's run away before,
you know. Not the first time
apparently.

Henry nods as he sips his coffee.

HENRY

Are Wesley and Rose here?

THERESA

They're playing in their rooms.
I've tried to keep them in since...

HENRY

And they haven't said anything else
about Dwight since he cycled off on
his own that day?

THERESA

No. They barely knew him you know,
he's a city cousin after all. Why?
Has something happened?

HENRY

We found his bicycle in some
bushes. No prints or anything else.
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

Soaking wet out there the last few days. So there's no trail to follow. Seems like a dead end.

Theresa nods, unsure what to say. Henry finishes his coffee, stands, heads to the door, hesitates.

HENRY

We'd like to try something if it's all right with you.

Theresa nods, sees Henry out, waits until his car starts, then heads up the stairs double quick.

WESLEY'S ROOM

Posters of pop bands on the wall, clothes on the floor. Rose and Wesley play a video game. They barely notice when Theresa enters the room. She stands to watch them. Wesley's eyes flick from the TV to Theresa. He pauses the game.

ROSE

Awww. I was winning.

WESLEY

What is it Mom?

THERESA

Sheriff Tate was just here again. asking about Dwight. Anything you want to tell me?

ROSE

He liked to swear. And to smoke.

THERESA

He was smoking marijuana?

WESLEY

No. It was a cigarette. And there's nothing else, Mom. We told you twenty times already. He stormed off. Can we back to the game, now?

THERESA

Okay, that's fine.

They nod, continue the game. Theresa leaves. Wesley waits until she's gone. A look passes between them.

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: Ten Days Later

Wesley, Rose and Theresa sit at the table eating in silence. Rose stops to stare off into the distance. She drops her fork. Theresa picks up her fork, offers it to her.

Rose doesn't register it. Horror masks her face. She points. As if in a trance. They follow her gaze.

ROSE

But, you went down the hole.

Dwight stands on the other side of the room. Soaking wet and covered in dirt. His eyes are dead. His mouth gapes open.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Wesley sits at a table in the interview room. Tears roll down his face. Theresa sits behind him looking on forlornly. Opposite Wesley sits Sherriff Henry Tate.

HENRY

Think it's about time you told us what really happened that day.

WESLEY

I already told you. He stormed off. That's it. I wanna go home now.

LATER

Rose now sits where Wesley sat. Henry and Theresa are in the same places.

HENRY

We know something else happened that day, Rose. So why don't you tell us. People are worried about Dwight. He disappears for days then turns up out of the blue.

ROSE

Wesley said not to say. Made me promise.

A look of alarm around the adults in the room.

THERESA

Rose, honey. This is important. You have to tell the truth now.

INT. CAVE - DAY - FLASHBACK

An enormous wave picks Wesley up and propels him through a maze of caverns and loops throwing him as if in a spin-cycle. And, then it calms. He clambers onto a bank, scans around.

On the opposite bank Dwight lies face down in the water. Wesley goes to him, turns him over, drags him from the water.

ROSE (V.O.)

They both went down the hole. Wesley said Dwight was dead when he found him. But that there was something in the water.

Dwight coughs. His eyes snap open. His wounds appear healed. He smiles. Wes looks down at his own body, at his cuts and the gash on his thigh. Wounds knitting together before his eyes. He glances at the water at it's unnatural rainbow hues.

ROSE (V.O.)

And then Wes said something else happened. Dwight turned strange.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - FLASHBACK

Wesley emerges from an opening in the rock hidden by foliage.

ROSE (V.O.)

Wes managed to get out before he...

He spots Rose in distance by the water's edge, her arms by her side. He blocks up the hole with rocks and branches.

ROSE (V.O.)

Wes said not to say anything, that adults won't believe in magic.

POLICE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Henry adjusts his hat as Theresa looks everywhere but into his eyes.

HENRY

The hospital says Dwight broke almost every bone in his body.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

And now, not a scratch. What do you make of all this, Theresa? This tale of miraculous pools of water.

THERESA

I don't know.

HENRY

Okay. Well for now, you can take them home.

EXT. HITCHEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

All the lights are out. A window creaks open. Wesley hops out, then leans back in to lift out Rose.

ROSE

Where we going?

WESLEY

We're going to fix you.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A flashlight casts an eerie glow over the forest floor. Wesley leads Rose by the hand.

FOREST FLOOR

Wesley brushes aside rocks and foliage.

WESLEY

Come with me.

She offers her hand and they slip beneath the surface. Rose looks around, like a kid in a candy shop she marvels at the colours and the dancing sprites. Wesley leads her to the water's edge.

Without warning Wesley grabs her and pushes her head under the water.

WESLEY

Like I said Rose, I'm going to fix you.

Her little arms windmill as Wesley holds her under.

FADE OUT.