

Out of the Woods

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EXT. FOREST- NIGHT

A scrawny 20 something girl, MAYA, stumbles through the dark dense woods with not a soul in site.

Moonlight occasionally creeps through the tree tops, reflecting off the tiny gold chain draped around Maya's neck.

She keeps her right hand in the pocket of her drug rug, leaving only one hand to clear the brush in front of her.

Unable to see more than a few feet in front of herself, Maya trips on an unseen root and faceplants into the ground.

Upon impact, Maya immediately feels around in her pocket to see if it's contents are still there- but they're not.

Maya begins frantically feeling around the forest floor for her prized goods.

The moonlight catches her syringe lying under a bush and Maya desperately crawls towards the little twinkle.

She immediately picks up the syringe and now spots a tiny bag of white powder.

Maya shoves the syringe back into her pocket and makes an animalistic lunge for the white powder.

Maya snatches the bag of white powder off the ground and caresses it in the palm of hands- tracing the birdie emblem on the bag with the tip of her finger.

Maya rolls up her sleeves as if she's about to shoot up, but hesitates as she looks at the nasty plethora of needle scabs.

Before she has the chance to shoot up, Maya hears a crack in the distance and whips her head around to see where the sound came from.

Maya spots a warm flickering light off in the distance and immediately shoves the powder back in her pockets and bolts towards the inviting little light.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING- NIGHT

As Maya runs towards the light she enters a circular shaped clearing with a cauldron-topped campfire at the centre of it.

Maya begins creeping towards the fire, only to spot an ominous figure humming in the shadows- Maya freezes.

THE VOODOO QUEEN, a skeleton-esq woman with an overdone head wrap and a tiny gold chain tucked into her dress, dances out from the shadows.

The Voodoo Queen hymns as she mozies over towards the cauldron, holding a live snake by its neck.

Ignoring Maya, the Voodoo Queen watches the snake squirm for its life as she dips it in and out of the boiling cauldron, taking pleasure in every second of the snakes pain.

Without removing her eyes from the snake-

VOODOO QUEEN

How rude of you to keep me waiting,  
my little sugarplum.

MAYA

Who are you?

VOODOO QUEEN

Only your gift from the heavens  
above.

MAYA

Do you know how to-

Maya catches sight of the tortured snake and tries to mask her fear of this strange woman in the forest.

The snake finally stops squirming and the Voodoo Queen shifts her glance to Maya and drops the dead snake into the cauldron.

Maya grimaces.

VOODOO QUEEN

Get out of the Woods?

Maya stares at the cauldron still shocked by what the Voodoo Queen did to the snake.

VOODOO QUEEN (CONT)

Tell me sweetie, what are you doing  
out in these woods so late?

MAYA

I was, um, looking for something.

VOODOO QUEEN

It must have been oh-so-special for  
you to come out in the woods all  
alone looking for it.

MAYA

I mean looking isn't really the right-

VOODOO QUEEN

Hush, hush child. A little *birdie* told me you'd be passing through tonight.

MAYA

I can't remember any bird who really spoke, but sometimes it's hard to tell the-

VOODOO QUEEN

Silly child.

MAYA

Please don't hurt me, I didn't mean to-

VOODOO QUEEN

To what?

MAYA

I'm sorry!

VOODOO QUEEN

(chuckling)

I wasn't talking about an actual bird darling.

MAYA

What? What about the bird? The bird? Who's talking?

VOODOO QUEEN

This birdie happened to be a man, a man who was carrying a very special something.

MAYA

You're confusing me. I need to go. I need to go.

Maya turns to leave.

VOODOO QUEEN

So soon? Don't worry child- I have a feeling your quite familiar with my little Birdie. He delivers tiny bags of magical white powder to children just like you.

Maya panics and clenches onto the tiny birdie-stamped bag of white powder in her pocket.

MAYA  
I don't like birds.

Maya begins to walk back into the forest.

VOODOO QUEEN  
Think you can get out of here  
alone? You can't even finish a  
sentence darling.  
(beat)  
But before I bid you farewell, tell  
me sugarplum, did you come into my  
woods to find the Birdie?

Maya lingers on the edge of the woods and clenches her bag of powder again, ignoring the Voodoo Queen's question.

VOODOO QUEEN (CONT)  
It's a shame I killed that snake  
for nothing isn't it child.

MAYA  
You're not real.

The Voodoo queen gives a sarcastic chuckle at Maya's disillusionment.

VOODOO QUEEN  
Oh, my little sugarplum. You know,  
I could have helped you slither out  
of these woods undetected by the  
Birdie.  
(Beat)  
You know how he gets when his  
clients linger-

Maya now petrified, whips around and gives a stoic-

MAYA  
Tell me how to get out of the  
woods.

VOODOO QUEEN  
-around here for too long.  
(Malicious chuckle)  
As much as I love this rush of  
bravery, it's not free child.

This curveball sent Maya back to her normal paranoid demenour.

MAYA  
What do you want?

VOODOO QUEEN  
Something oh-so-very special to  
you.

MAYA  
Um, here, take my mother's  
necklace.

Maya reaches for her gold chain.

VOODOO QUEEN  
Aren't we eager now-

The Voodoo Queen walks up to Maya and reaches into her pocket and snatches the little white bag of powder out of her hand.

VOODOO QUEEN(CONT)  
I was thinking an item more along  
the lines of this.

MAYA  
No, no please I need that.

VOODOO QUEEN  
So I see.

MAYA  
Please, I'm begging you, I'll give  
anything else, an arm, a leg, the  
necklace take the necklace, money  
how about money for a new cauldron  
or something, anything. Please just  
give it back!

The Voodoo Queen moves towards the cauldron as Maya begs and tugs her away from the boiling pot.

VOODOO QUEEN  
(Chanting)  
The snake has been sacrificed and  
the ash spread all I need is a part  
of you and you won't be dead.

The Voodoo Queen drops the bag of white powder in the cauldron.

MAYA  
No! Why would you do that?!

Maya shoves the Voodoo Queen aside and plunges her hand into the boiling cauldron in a futile attempt to save her drugs.

MAYA

(to herself)

No, no. It's not real, this isn't  
happening, I can still get high, I  
can get high, I can get high.

As Maya screams out in agony as smoke starts to swell up around her- now we can only clearly see the Voodoo Queen.

The Voodoo Queen retreats into The smoke to stop Maya.

Just as the Voodoo Queen enters the smoke, Maya stumbles out from the smoke gasping for clean air.

MAYA

This is all your fault! Why!

VOODOO QUEEN(V.O)

You asked me how to get out of the  
woods, it's not my fault you  
couldn't live with the price.

MAYA

I could have gotten out of the  
woods without all this snake  
chanting shit!

VOODOO QUEEN (V.O)

I did my part, now leave child  
before I do something I'll regret.

MAYA

No, you took a part of me now get  
me out of here.

The Voodoo Queen adds more powders to the cauldron and the smoke grows exponentially darker and faster.

The Voodoo Queen steps out of the smoke unfazed.

VOODOO QUEEN

So be it.

Maya contemplates going back for the drugs, but as the smoke spread she begins vigorously gasping for air.

Maya decides to bolt out of the clearing as the toxic smoke follows closely behind.

Maya is now running with one hand holding up her shirt over her nose, and one hand to clear the brush.

Maya sees a light flickering off in the distance and bolts towards it, only to come across another clearing in the woods.

This time, the light is a street lamp and the clearing in the edge of the forest. Maya made it out of the woods.

EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST- NIGHT

As she comes into the clearing Maya collapses onto the ground into the fetal position.

The Voodoo Queen stands on the edge of the forest with the smoke still swelling behind her; the gold necklace has swung out from underneath her dress, and her head wrap is messed up because of the chase.

As the Voodoo Queen watches over Maya, she slips off her head wrap and bears an uncanny resemblance to Maya.

Maya sits up and stares at the Voodoo Queen's necklace and reaches into her shirt and looks at hers- they're the same.

The Voodoo Queen turns her arms towards Maya to reveal the identical burns and scars.

Maya rolls up her sleeve as well and looks at the Voodoo Queen acknowledging their identical arms and necklaces.

Maya no longer speaks like a frantic mess.

MAYA

You understand.

The Voodoo Queen nods and hides her arms and tucks her necklace away.

Maya reaches into her pocket to see if the powder is still there, but only finds the syringe she had recovered earlier.

She takes the syringe out of her pocket and tosses it off into the darkness.

MAYA

Thank you for-

Maya looks back towards the Voodoo Queen only to find that the Voodoo Queen had disappeared as well.

Maya stares into the smoke to try and see her but there's not a soul in sight.

Maya lays back on the ground like a starfish in the damp grass. Letting the dew cool the burns of the cauldron she begins to cry tears of joy.