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The Woods 1: Die vergessene Anstalt

The Woods 1: The Abandoned Sanatorium

Young Adult Fiction | Recommended age: 14+ | ISBN: 978-3-7891-8415-0656-6 | Pages: 320

First Published: November 2020 | © Oetinger Taschenbuch im Verlag Friedrich Oetinger

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In the woods, you are all alone

On a field trip, twins Ira and Vanjo lose their way in the woods. They seek sanctuary in a dilapidated sanatorium, where they encounter a group of young people from a boot camp. But something isn't right. Why do all routes lead back to the doors of the sanatorium? Where are the nocturnal gasping and shuffling sounds coming from? Thrown back on their own resources, there's only one thing they can do: solve the mystery of the sanatorium. However, the tensions within the group are mounting, and it soon transpires that they are in real danger.

- Highest level excitement and mystery
- Netflix-style mystery - has similarities with "The Society", "Dark" und "Stranger Things"
- Nightmarish setting: an abandoned sanatorium.
- Group dynamics, psychological tension, dual narrative perspective.

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Synopsis comprising short extracts

"We need help! It's urgent! We're the school kids who went missing a few days ago. We're in the old sanatorium. Please tell the police - quickly!"

"In the sanatorium?" The raspy voice suddenly sounds alarmed. The radio's crackling intensifies.

"Yes - the abandoned sanatorium," Ira shouts into the device.

"He'll get you."

"What?"

The crackling becomes even worse. "He's getting me. He's going to get me. He'll get you. He'll get all of us."

"What do you mean?" Ira's voice takes on a panicky note. I'm starting to feel panicky too. My whole body is trembling. Something's very wrong.

I put my face closer to the device and speak into it. "Who's going to get us? What are you talking about?"

The crackling is now virtually drowning everything else out. Julian tries fiddling with the set, but it just gets worse. Then it suddenly disappears.

We can hear the strange voice's next words more clearly than any that came before: "Run, as quickly as you can."

[The protagonists realise that they're not going to get out of this place. Every path through the forest leads them back to the door of the sanatorium. There's barely anything left to eat; their nerves are in shreds; Paul needs his heart medication. Then there's the gasping sound in the night which sounds as if a wild predator were breathing down their necks. Some of them think they've seen a tall, dark man. They are not alone. What's going on? They just want to go home...]

Vanjo and I are sitting on a tree stump in front of the flickering camp fire. It's crackling particularly loudly; sparks fly up into the darkness. The iron bars are close to hand. just beside us. I take in their sharp ends, then my gaze wanders beyond the edge of the woods and towards

the sanatorium. I keep thinking I can see something moving behind one of the gaping windows. Shadows looking across at us. But it's presumably just a product of the constant state of fear in which we are living.

"Don't you think it's weird that they haven't found us yet?" Vanjo is frowning. "How can it be possible in the twenty-first century not to be able to find someone in a stupid forest?"

"You're saying what everyone's thinking, only they daren't say it out loud."

"It's as if someone wanted us not to be found."

"As if we were part of some plan," I continue his train of thought.

"I dunno. Maybe there are hidden cameras everywhere, and this is the latest crap reality show," says Vanjo.

My twin brother and I laugh.

Although there's really nothing to laugh about. Everything is just getting worse and worse. I rub my arms and look grimly at the dark facade of the sanatorium. Bloody place.

[They make huge efforts to solve the mystery of the sanatorium and understand this horrible place. Maybe there's something inside the building that could help them to escape? But when Vanjo goes off on his own, it almost costs him his life. A scar-studded man straps him to an old surgical chair.]

The stranger's expression chills me to the bone.

"They don't understand it. But I do. And so do you. You will understand it too." In one bound, he's right next to me, his face close up to mine. I try not to gag at the stench of his foul breath.

"You will understand," he repeats, raising a rusty scalpel to my face. With one quick movement, he slashes my shirt open so that my upper body is exposed. "I'm going to turn you into a work of art."

"No!" I say, I plead, feeling the madman resting the scalpel just next to my right armpit. "Please, no. Stop. Wait. You don't have to ..."

An unspeakable pain sears through my chest. I yell madly. It feels as if my chest is being ripped apart. I strain at my shackles. It hurts so much.

"I know. Pain is freedom, isn't it?" The scarred man has moved away and seems to be adjusting the scalpel. I am submerged by waves of pain from the first wound.

"I make deep incisions, so that they last," he says. He laughs.

"Please..." I can barely speak.

"Shhhh," he says, and begins again.

[At the last minute, Benny manages to save Vanjo from certain death. But they can't save everyone. Even worse: while some of them are taking on the enemy inside the sanatorium, a far worse disaster is going on outside. And it seems that Ira has had something to do with it.]

"What have you done?" Alva screams. "What have you done?!"

I can feel her screaming right in my bones. Something terrible has happened. I can feel it with every fibre of my being. Then she moves aside, and I can see it. Down on the gravel, close to the sanatorium's stone fountain: a lifeless body. The head is unnaturally bent sideways and is lying in a pool of red blood. The pointed mouth is gaping open; the brown eyes, their make-up smudged, are wide open and staring into nothingness.

My blood runs cold, and my pounding heart skips a beat.

Ricarda is dead.