

OUTS IN FREE
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Inspired by the game *OXENFREE* by Night
School Studios

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FADE IN:

EXT. FERRY BOAT - NIGHT

The sun has just set. WREN, late teens, optimistic, logical, leans on a railing at the bow of the ferry, gazing at an island in the distance. A smile creeps onto her face before she turns on her heel and walks over to JAY, late teens, cynical, mordant, and ROBIN, late teens, relaxed, scatter-brained, sitting on a bench under the cover of the bridge. They stop chatting and look up at Wren.

WREN

I can see Rerun in the distance. We should be landing soon.

ROBIN

Finally! I swear, every time I take this ferry the trip gets longer and longer. Wren, tell me I'm not crazy.

Wren rolls her eyes good-naturedly. Robin pats the bench next to him, and she sits down.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

So, Wren, Jay, are you guys ready for the best camping trip ever?

Wren whoops. Jay gives an awkward laugh.

JAY

Yeah, sure.

WREN

Don't worry, Jay. Me and Robin come here all the time, we know what we're doing.

JAY

It's not that, I just --

Jay sighs deeply.

JAY (CONT'D)

(awkwardly)

Thanks again for bringing me along on this trip, you guys.

(MORE)

JAY (CONT'D)

I know I'm the new kid at school and all, and some teacher or the principal is probably making you invite me to stuff to make me feel included, or whatever, but you've actually been really cool, and...

Jay flushes and looks away.

JAY (CONT'D)

Well, that's it. So thanks.

Wren and Robin are staring at Jay. They take a quick glance at each other, then back to Jay. Robin bursts out laughing. Wren smiles, then slaps Jay on the shoulder.

WREN

Aw, Jay, ya big sap! No one's making us do anything, we invited you 'cause you're cool. Give yourself a little credit.

ROBIN

Yeah, dude! I mean, we don't get a lot of kids moving to Eagle Harbour. Hell, people move AWAY from here. Also, when I saw you walk into our English class with a Legend of Hilda T-shirt on, I knew it was destiny.

Jay laughs.

JAY

Alright, alright. (beat) So, what's so great about this island, anyway?

ROBIN

Tour time! Wren, give our fine friend the rundown, will ya?

Wren gives Robin a playful shove.

WREN

Okay, so this island used to be a military base back during the war. But since then, its been decommissioned and turned into a tourist trap. Gift shop, cute little restaurant, the works.

(MORE)

WREN (CONT'D)

It's surrounded by a big forest and a beach, and the senior class has an annual kegger there that gets pretty crazy. There's also--

ROBIN

But the best part about the island is the weirdo caves.

JAY

Weirdo caves?

ROBIN

(excitedly)

Yeah! There's this thing you can do at, like... the front--

WREN

(unimpressed)

The mouth?

ROBIN

--The mouth of the cave. We just need one of these...

Robin pulls his backpack out from under his seat. He digs into the bag and pulls out a handheld radio. He shoves it in Jay's face, who scowls and swats it away.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

We can use this radio to tune into some really fucked-up ghostly shit in the cave. Like, we're talking radio stations that don't even exist. Wren knows the score, we tried it last summer. Tell him, Wren!

WREN

(annoyed)

Come on, man. I thought we weren't gonna spoil the surprise.

ROBIN

I know, I know. I'm just really excited, okay? It's gonna be great!

Jay starts rubbing his temples and stands up. He walks over to the open deck.

JAY

I don't know how I feel about ghosts. I didn't sign up for that.

Wren gets up and walks over to Jay.

WREN

They aren't really ghosts. It's probably just leftover radio waves from the army base. Just let Robin have his fun, he's harmless.

ROBIN

I heard that.

Jay sighs and looks back at Robin.

JAY

If you say so.

THE FERRY HORN SOUNDS LOUDLY, making Wren and Jay jump. Wren laughs. Robin then gets up and runs over to Wren and Jay and puts his arms around their shoulders from behind, nearly knocking them over. Jay scowls and fixes his toque.

ROBIN

We're here!

A BELL CHIMES and an announcement plays over the ferry intercom.

INTERCOM (V.O.)

WE ARE NOW LANDING AT RERUN ISLAND
TERMINAL. PLEASE REMEMBER TO--

ROBIN

--Check under your seats to make
sure you didn't leave behind any
grandchildren, blah, blah, blah...

Jay laughs. The three kids turn and retrieve their packs from under the bench.

JAY

You guys have been here a lot, huh?

WREN

You have no idea.

Wren, Jay, and Robin sling their packs over their shoulders and head toward the exit ramp. Robin runs past Wren and Jay onto the dock.

CUT TO:

EXT. RERUN DOCK - SAME DAY

Robin is alone in the middle of the dock, and Wren and Jay meet up with him. They walk down the dock together and down a flight of stairs at the end down to the beach.

EXT. RERUN BEACH - SAME

ROBIN

Alright, here we are! Just a few minutes down the beach is where we'll be staying the night.

Wren and Jay nod. The three kids walk down the beach for a few moments in silence.

JAY

Anyone want a smoke?

ROBIN

If it's a cigarette, no.

WREN

No, thanks, I don't smoke. Tried it once, nearly died, never again.

Robin laughs.

ROBIN

Oh yeah... Raven's party. Good times.

Jay lights a cigarette and takes a long drag as they continue walking down the beach.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

So, Jay. Why'd you end up moving to Eagle Harbour, anyway?

JAY

Oh, I... uh--

Jay rubs the back of his neck ruefully before taking another drag on his cigarette. Wren shoots Robin a glare.

WREN

(sheepishly)

It's cool, you can tell us another time.

JAY
(resignedly)
No, it's fine. You guys were bound
to hear the rumors sooner or later.

Jay sighs apprehensively.

JAY (CONT'D)
I moved here with my dad because we
needed a fresh start. My mom...
passed away, and it really got to
us. I ended up snapping and beating
the shit out of some kid at my old
school, and my dad couldn't stand
being in that house anymore, so we
just... got out.

Wren and Robin stop walking and stare at Jay with wide eyes.
They are all silent for a few moments. Jay attempts to break
the awkwardness.

JAY (CONT'D)
That town was kind of a shit hole,
anyway.

ROBIN
Where'd you used to live?

JAY
Morton.

ROBIN
Ouch.

No one speaks for some time. Jay finishes his cigarette,
chucks it onto the sand, and stamps it out violently.

WREN
Sorry, Jay. We didn't mean to--

JAY
(frustrated)
Don't worry about it. Now you know.

They all look at the ground awkwardly and keep walking in
silence. After about 15 minutes, they reach a stretch of
beach lined with forest. There is a cave at the other end.
The beach is littered with crushed beer cans, cigarette
butts, and hand-rolled filters. There is a ring of stones
around a blackened pit with ashes in the centre.

ROBIN
Well, here we are! Paradise. What
do you think, Jay?

They all drop their packs and Jay scans the surroundings.

JAY
It's... nice?

WREN
A couple seniors had a party here
last weekend. Usually it's not this
messy.

Jay peels a pair of underwear off a tree branch. He flings it
aside.

JAY
(sarcastically)
Sure.

Wren and Jay begin setting up tents and unrolling sleeping
bags. Robin takes the radio out of his pack.

ROBIN
Ooh, Wren! Find something good.

He tosses the radio to Wren and she barely catches it. Wren
turns the dial back and forth. STATIC BUZZES while she
searches for a radio station, and the boys continue setting
up the campsite. Wren finally settles on a frequency with
rock music and gets back to setting up. A few minutes pass as
the tents go up. Robin chucks his pack into his tent and puts
his hands on his hips.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
So, who's ready to check out the
cave?

WREN
Me!

JAY
Alright.

Wren pockets the radio and they all head for the cave at the
end of the beach.

INT. CAVE ENTRANCE - SAME.

They stop just inside the mouth of the cave. Jay leans up
against the cave wall. Robin throws open his arms
enthusiastically.

ROBIN
Who's ready to have their mind
blown?

Robin receives no response. Jay crosses his arms.

JAY

How do we even do this?

ROBIN

We just turn the dial until the
ghosts show up.

JAY

That's it?

WREN

Yup. It's that easy.

JAY

No summoning ritual, or anything?
No rain dance?

WREN

Nope.

ROBIN

Just *summon* that radio and we'll
get started.

Wren fakes a laugh and pulls out the radio. She starts
turning the dial to the left slowly while STATIC BUZZES. Jay
comes closer to watch. Suddenly, a LOW, CONTINUOUS GROWL
comes out of the radio.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Whoa!

JAY

That's... pretty cool, actually.

ROBIN

Keep going, Wren!

Wren slowly turns the dial to the right. Eventually the radio
makes a CRACKLING NOISE THAT BLURS INTO A WHOOSHING SOUND.

JAY

This is incredible!

WREN

We told you!

Wren keeps turning the dial to the right, but the radio makes
no noise. She turns the dial all the way to the left, and
still no noise.

WREN (CONT'D)
It's not... doing anything.

ROBIN
Let me try.

Robin takes the radio and starts turning the dial back and forth. There is only SOFT STATIC. Suddenly, the RADIO GOES SILENT.

WREN
Robin, what did you do? Did you break it?

ROBIN
No! It just turned off. It's fine.

Robin turns the radio off and on again, but still it makes no sound.

JAY
Yup, you broke it.

ROBIN
(annoyed)
I didn't! Just give it a sec.

They all stand together in silence, looking down at the radio for a few moments.

JAY
(sarcastically)
Thanks for bringing me along, you guys! This was definitely--

THE RADIO EMITS AN EAR-PIERCING SCREECH. Robin drops the radio and all three kids cover their ears. Eventually it BLURS INTO STATIC and they uncover their ears.

JAY (CONT'D)
What the fuck was that?

WREN
I don't--

RADIO
THERE. YOU. ARE.

The kids huddle together and stare at the radio lying on the cave floor.

RADIO (CONT'D)
GOOD. TO. SEE. YOU.
(beat)
FINALLY. NOT. ALONE.

Two green pinhead-sized lights appear side-by-side at the back of the cave and move in the direction of the kids. The lights move up and down as they move closer.

ROBIN
Oh my--

WREN
Run.

Wren scoops up the radio and the three kids run out of the cave and past their tents. Wren looks back briefly and sees the two green lights multiply outside the mouth of the cave. Vaguely human-shaped shadows surround the lights. Wren, Robin, and Jay continue running away from the cave and turn to enter the forest.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - SAME

The low-hanging branches tear at the kids and SNAP as they run through them. After several minutes, they stop at a clearing to catch their breath. They are all panting as they start brushing themselves off.

ROBIN
What the hell is going on?

JAY
You tell me!

WREN
We... tuned into something? Some...
one?

JAY
If this is some kind of prank, It's
not funny.

ROBIN
This is not a prank! How could we
even plan this?!

WREN
Just calm down. We seem to be safe
here.

ROBIN
Why not just go back to our
campsite? We could--

RADIO
YOU WANT. TO PLAY?
(beat)
FINE. LET'S. PLAY.

Wren stares, wide-eyed, at the radio in her hand. She looks at Robin and Jay.

JAY
I'm not going back to the campsite.

ROBIN
Yeah, good call.

They all stand in silence, save for the SOFT CHIRPING OF CRICKETS. Jay looks at Wren.

JAY
Get rid of it.

WREN
What?

JAY
Get rid of the radio. Whatever that *thing* was used it to talk to us. If we get rid of it, it can't terrorize us.

WREN
But what if we need it? In case you haven't noticed, we're now trapped here because we took the last ferry, everyone who works here went home hours ago, and no one actually *lives* here.

ROBIN
Yeah, We could use it to, like, communicate with something and find a way home. Wren's good with computers, she can get it working.

Jay pinches the bridge of his nose.

JAY
(aggravated)
A radio is *not* a computer.

ROBIN
Tomato, potato.

JAY
That's not even--

WREN
Just shut up, both of you. Let's
find somewhere to lay low and think
of a plan.

Wren starts walking through the woods. Robin and Jay follow behind. They walk in silence for a long time. As they walk, they continue to brush leaves, sticks, and dirt off their clothes and out of their hair. Robin rubs the blood off a cut on his cheek and smears it on his hoodie. After some time, they come upon an old shed with a padlock on the door.

ROBIN
Hey! This looks promising.

Jay walks up to the door. A sign on the door reads "TOWHEE STATION."

JAY
I think it's a way station. There
could be something in here to help
us get home.

ROBIN
Let's kick it down!

WREN
Robin, that's the best thing you've
said all night.

Wren, Robin, and Jay gather around the door to the shed. Robin counts down from three and they each take turns kicking down the door. It doesn't take long for the wood around the door handle to splinter and break off. The door flies open. Robin whoops and pumps his fists in the air.

WREN (CONT'D)
I'll go in. You guys wait out here.

Wren enters the shed while Jay and Robin sit on the ground outside.

INT./EXT. OLD SHED (TOWHEE STATION)/FOREST - SAME

WREN rummages around inside the shed. Jay cradles the radio. Robin calls through the shed door to Wren.

ROBIN
Find anything useful?

WREN (O.S)
Nope, nothing. Just a bunch of
busted radio equipment.

ROBIN
Great, the only time I get to kick
down a door and it's for nothing.

JAY
I thought you were good with radios
and tech and all that stuff.

WREN (O.S)
I can't magically create a new
radio out of a bunch of broken
shit, Jay.

Wren exits the shed and collapses onto the ground next to Jay
and Robin. She grabs the radio from Jay. Jay scowls.

WREN (CONT'D)
(deflated)
We may as well make use of the one
we've got, even if some ghost's
possessed it. I'll try scanning for
something that could help us.

Wren turns the radio on and turns the dial back and forth.
She settles on a radio frequency with FAINT, INDISCERNIBLE
DIALOGUE. Beat. Jay groans and buries his face in his hands.

JAY
(frustrated)
I can't believe this. I thought you
guys came here all the time. When I
accepted your invitation to this
island I never thought I'd be
running away from zombies or ghosts
or monsters.
(beat)
Or whatever the hell is after us.

WREN
Jay, we would never have come here
tonight if we knew this was going
to happen. Me and Robin just wanted
to show you a good time. We're all
in the same boat here, come on.
Buck up a little.

JAY
(sarcastically)
Sure, I'll just do that.

ROBIN
Yeah, don't worry, man. I mean,
kind of a bad way to start off the
night, but we'll find a way out of
this and be back home in no time.
As long as we--

THE RADIO EMITS A SUDDEN DISTORTED SOUND AND GOES SILENT
AGAIN. Startled, Wren, Jay, and Robin flinch.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Holy Christmas!

JAY
Jesus, Wren, turn that thing off.

Jay wrests the radio from Wren's hands and turns it off with
shaking hands.

JAY (CONT'D)
(growling)
What is with this friggin' radio?
Why does it keep spitting out weird
noises?

Jay sighs.

JAY (CONT'D)
I just want to leave this place.

WREN
Relax. The radio's just picking up
garbled junk.

The three stare at the ground dejectedly. Beat.

RADIO
IS. LEAVE. POSSIBLE.

Wren, Jay, and Robin jump to their feet. Jay drops the radio
on the ground.

ROBIN
What was...?

Wren turns to Jay.

WREN
Jay, what... what did you--

JAY

I didn't do anything! The radio
just--

RADIO

DO NOT. WORRY. BE. HERE. SOON.
(beat)
TAG. YOU. IT.

THE RADIO EMITS LOUD STATIC. Wren picks it up, finds that it
was turned on, and turns it off again.

JAY

So... now what? Do we just stand
here and wait for some radio ghost
to come and kill us all?

ROBIN

(frazzled)
Radio ghost? Oh no... no, no, no--

WREN

C'mon guys, we're gonna be fine--

Robin starts pacing. Jay runs his hands through his hair.

JAY

(breathless)
Holy shit...

ROBIN

(frazzled)
I'm, like, allergic to ghosts. I
can't do it. Can't. I'm gonna--

Wren slaps Jay and grabs Robin by the shoulders.

WREN

(shouting)
Shut the hell up! Both of you,
listen to me.
(more softly)
There has to be a way off this
island without waiting for
tomorrow's ferry. We are getting
out of here, now, before whatever
that was finds us. We can come up
with a plan as we go, all I know
now is that we have to move. Are we
in agreement?

Beat.

ROBIN
Yes, sir.

JAY
(sighs)
Okay.

Wren pockets the radio. The three walk hurriedly away from Towhee Station along an undeveloped trail.

BACK TO:

EXT. FOREST - SAME

The kids walk in silence for a few minutes before Jay regains his senses.

JAY
Wait. Wren, did you slap me back there?

WREN
You were spiralling, dude. What else was I supposed to do?

JAY
Robin was spiralling, but you didn't slap *him*.

WREN
Robin's bones are made of glass. He wouldn't survive one of my slaps.

ROBIN
Don't worry, man. Just take it as a compliment.

JAY
(under his breath)
Whatever.

They eventually reach a large steel sign. It reads "FORT ECHO." They stop before it.

ROBIN
Oh, I remember this! We went on a field trip here in, like, grade five. The fort used to be like, a... communications... thingy... during the, uh, war. I'll bet there's still a radio in there that we can use to call home, or the Coast Guard, or something.

WREN

Well that's something. Let's head there.

JAY

But the war was, like, so long ago. How do we know that anything will still work?

WREN

Got any other ideas?

Jay sighs.

JAY

I guess not.

ROBIN

Great! We'll go with my plan, then.

Jay groans. The three follow the beaten path towards Fort Echo and pass through a torn chain-link fence to enter.

EXT. FORT ECHO - SAME

Wren, Jay, and Robin scan their surroundings. There is a watchtower, several rows of barracks and garages, and a communications tower. Robin points to the communications tower in the distance.

ROBIN

There's the comms tower thing. If there's anything here that'll help get us home, it'll be in there.

JAY

Here's hoping.

They walk past the barracks. Wren stops to read graffiti on the barracks wall.

WREN

"See a man about a dog." Huh. Any thoughts?

ROBIN

Nope. Too weird for me.

They continue toward the communications tower. The three reach the tower and Wren tries the door, but to no avail.

WREN

It's locked.

ROBIN

Aw.

JAY

Just hold on. I might be able to do something.

Jay kneels in front of the door and starts picking the lock. Wren and Robin watch from behind.

WREN

What are you doing?

JAY

Picking the lock.

ROBIN

Whoa! Where'd you pick that up?

JAY

A couple years ago, back in my hometown. Skills of a misspent youth, and all that.

WREN

You never told us you were a badass, Jay.

JAY

I'm not. Don't make it a thing.

ROBIN

(giggling, under his breath)

So badass.

Jay spends a few moments picking the lock. The lock pops and he pries the door open.

WREN

Nice! Now let's see what we have to work with.

The three enter the communications room.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - SAME

Robin finds a light switch and turns it on. Wren and Jay explore the room. Wren settles on an old radio setup and flicks a switch. A green light turns on.

WREN

I'll see if I can relay a message
to... something. Hopefully someone
out there is listening.

Wren flicks some switches and pulls the microphone to her
mouth.

WREN (CONT'D)

Hello? Is anyone out there? We're
trapped on Rerun Island, there's
something on the island with us, we
don't know what it is. We need
help.

Wren hesitates, listening, then puts down the microphone.

JAY

Any luck?

Wren shakes her head.

WREN

Nope. I think this is a low-
frequency radio, it doesn't beam
out. I'll try a different one.

ROBIN

Sorry, but the other setups are
busted. Looks like we'll be stuck
here 'till morning.

JAY

(defeated)

Great. Let's just stay here and
wait it out, and hopefully we won't
meet any more weird monsters or
ghosts that want to suck us into
the radio.

ROBIN

Haunted sleepover! Eh?

JAY

(annoyed)

Just... don't.

Robin and Jay sit on the floor. Wren takes the radio out of
her coat pocket and lays it on the floor. She shoves her
hands into her pockets.

WREN

I think I'm gonna look around a bit more, see if I can find anything useful... like maybe a working radio, or some old military rations to get us through the night.

ROBIN

If you meet any new ghosts, don't tell me, 'cause I don't wanna know.

Wren rolls her eyes, gives a thumbs up, and walks to the opposite end of the room. She touches the dusty old equipment and slowly scans the yellowed posters on the walls. She stops at an empty space on the wall with large red letters painted on it.

WREN

(thoughtfully)

"Saw the man but not the dog"...

(beat)

Wait. Hey, guys, didn't we just--

THE RADIO SCREECHES to life. Robin and Jay jump and cover their ears. Wren runs to join them. THE SCREECHING BLURS INTO STATIC and the three teenagers huddle together.

RADIO

STOP. TRYING. YOU WILL. NOT.
ESCAPE. JUST. LIKE. US. HERE.
FOREVER. REPEATING. FOREVER.
REPEAT. FOR.

Robin and Jay are pulled apart from Wren slowly by an invisible force. Their bodies crumple under the force as they move further away from Wren. Wren tries to reach for Jay but her legs are anchored to the floor.

JAY

Oh God--

WREN

(voice breaking)

Robin! Jay...!

Robin and Jay lock eyes with Wren. The lights flicker several times in rapid succession, and when they come back on Robin and Jay have disappeared. Wren is left alone in the communications room. She finally collapses onto her knees and tears stream down her cheeks. THE STATIC CEASES.

RADIO
ALL. THE OUTS. IN. FREE.

FADE OUT.