



Before Boys

INFO

Short film directed by Florence Faure.

With Asia Amans, Zoé Millet, Lou Noérie, Lou Malek-Brière.

22 min. Color/Black and White. Comedy.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Four thirteen years old girls are growing bored at a friend's house.

Looking for amusement, they create a fake account on a dating app to flirt with older men.

One man gets their attention.

They make a date to see him at a bar...



LONG SYNOPSIS

Claire, a 14 years old girl on the cusp of puberty, is joining her group of friends, only made up of girls her age but who are well into their adolescence and already looking like women.

Tonight, there is a party with the boys of their class at one of the girls' apartment, and all the group is very excited except for Claire. She is uncomfortable, not at ease in the presence of the guys, and dreads to see them coming which is mocked by her friends.

When the boys never show up, the girls decide to go find some real men on a dating application. They exchange messages with one mysterious man, set up a date in a bar, and rush to the meeting point.

Sure enough, once the girls are in front of the man, they don't dare to confront him. To prove her membership to the group and driven by her desire to become a woman, Claire decides to go talk to him and to meet with masculinity for the first time.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I started writing this script after being struck by the physical difference that often exist between teenagers of the exact same age.

I used to live next to a middle school and observed girls already looking like women socializing with girls still looking very childish. Sometimes, the more mature girls would ridicule the little ones.

I thought it could be interesting to use this physical gap as a starting point for a script examining the emergence of female sexuality and the subsequent conflicts in adolescent friendship.



Sexuality

Implied in the title “Before Boys”, Claire’s sexuality is examined right before she joins her friends in adolescence, before she mixes with boys of her age. This zone between two ages, between two sexes is the source of inner conflict for Claire who, in the first scene of the movie, in front of her mirror, is wondering, “If I am not a woman, am I still a child? Or am I a tomboy?”

I wanted Claire to embark on a sexual identity quest. She is searching for a place in her group of friends but is not a woman for her friends nor an object of desire for the boys of her age. Therefore she temporarily finds a part to play in the group that is masculine, bordering on violent. The way Claire is dressed, her hair style, her body language, and her vocabulary are from a masculine universe. In one scene, she asserts power over her friend Myriam in a judo fight.

By contrast, her friends' attributes are feminine, like the makeup they wear, their long wavy hair or the transparent dress that Myriam received from Aurore that Claire manages to destroy. That said, I wanted this femininity to be more than the acquisition of external signs and stereotyped characteristics. I wanted them to discover it like an inner power, something profound and organic. I worked on the music with the composers to try to emphasize the mystery of this new energy. During the dating app scene, in which Claire's friends are testing their powers of seduction, the music evokes witches in front of their magical cauldron.

In an attempt to erase this difference between her and her friends, Claire puts herself in danger by agreeing to meet with an unknown man from the dating app. He represents a sort of "big bad wolf".



The Big Bad Wolf

I prioritized the symbolic over the real as I was very interested in the form of the tale. To write the script, I was inspired by Little Red Riding Hood and its analysis by Bruno Bettelheim. He sees the stage of puberty as Little Red Riding Hood's major theme and underlined the danger that young women see in their first interaction with men. It is this risk and the violence of adulthood that Claire is ready to face, as a rite of passage to enter into another age.

However, I did not want to see Claire as the victim of the wolf. Therefore I chose not to put a red hood on her shoulders but a jean jacket and Mick Jagger's big lips and tongue on her T-shirt. This Rolling Stones reference announces her willingness to kiss (to find satisfaction!) but also to become the wolf's hanging tongue, with an unquenchable thirst for lust and danger.

In this ambiguous transitional time, Claire suddenly jumps into a raw and sexual adulthood (watching porn movies and kissing an older man) only to come right back to childhood. She is at an age of assumed femininity, an age in which she feels the need to “brûler les étapes” and progress in leaps rather than steps. I wanted to emphasize this uncomfortable and frenzied feeling of dueling identities by using both black and white film and digital color.

The digital red of Little Red Riding Hood is used as the main color of the film. The red, symbol of femininity, of blood, of danger, is present in the film through different elements such as the red lipstick, the decoration of the apartment, the red stop light Claire sees in the car, the buildings’ neon lights. The black and white counterbalances this excess of color and brings Claire to a safe zone, a time of childhood.



The Value of Friendship

These physical differences between the girls reorganize the balance of the group. Claire is not as developed as her friends so she suffers from their mockery and rejection. Myriam was her best friend but now spends more time with Aurore who shares more common interests with her. Nonetheless, Claire is not ready to accept this outcome and fights to win back the friendship of her best friend.

Usually teenagers are seen as volatile creatures who change friends and lovers as often as they desire and are not necessarily attached by profound feelings. But I see them trying to build their own story through meaningful relations, something sacred that would give a sense to their lives. I have noticed that young girls often keep memories, pictures or notes, like sacred totems from their friends as if they were proof of the legitimacy and longevity of their attachment.

For me, this age is the time of risk and disruption but also of promises to lifelong friendship. I wanted to show a character who protects the value of friendship as a belief in the other.

I like the idea of a 13 years old nostalgic girl. In the middle of all the changes, Claire's character is seeking stability. The changing group dynamics are the reason for the character's growing pains. I use 16mm instead of digital media to examine the unalterable quality of time and Claire's quest for long lasting friendship.

Simply, it is a short movie about friendships that sometimes resist the time that goes by.



REFERENCES

The script is not inspired by memories but impressions and sensations I have of this time. I grew up with a certain freedom that provided space for a joyful and energetic youth. It is this experience of adolescence (that is explored in the movies I used to watch) that I wanted to talk about.

The movies include *Kids* by Larry Clark, *Le Péril Jeune* by Cédric Klapisch, *La Haine* by Mathieu Kassovitz and *Petites* by Noémie Lvovsky. They have a taste for dialogues and the force of youth that I wanted to explore. Also I thought about the movies of my childhood, with profound and fanciful characters such as the young Doinel in Les *Quatre-cent Coups* by François Truffaut or the kids of Jean Vigo in *Zéro de conduite*.

It is a humble homage to these kids that I wanted to create using the same black and white 16mm that they used in their films.

FOCUS ON THE TEAM

ASIA AMANS

Born in 2004, Asia is already building her carrier in movies (she was directed by Oscar winner Michel Hazanavicius in his last movie *Le Prince Oublié*) and on stage (Asia acted at the prestigious Théâtre de l'Odéon in 2018 in *Tristesse*, a play directed by Anne Cécile Vandalem).

She plays the lead character in “Before Boys”. Along with her fellow actors in the film, she enjoyed acting with Stéphane Mercoyrol (actor in the acclaimed *Blue Is the Warmest Color* by Abdellatif Kechiche).



VINCENT TABAILLON

Vincent (editor of *Taken 2* by Olivier Megaton, *Arthur and Invisibles* by Luc Besson, *The Incredible Hulk* and *Clash of the Titans* by Louis Leterrier...) fell in love with the script of “Before Boys” and decided to edit the film, with support from Delphine Genest (editor of the France Télévision TV show *Speakrine* and the Arte TV show *Au Service de la France*).

MALO THOUÉMENT

Graduate of the prestigious school Louis Lumière, Malo works on world-renowned French feature films (such as Michel Hazanavicius’s *Godard My Love*, *The Search* or *Le Prince Oublié*; *See You Up There* by Albert Dupontel; *The Emperor of Paris* and *Vidocq* by Jean-François Richet, both starring Vincent Cassel). Malo is the head of the sound department and the sound engineer on “Before Boys”.

KARIM EL KATARI

Karim, colorist for “Before Boys”, is the colorist of some of the most important French and international directors (including Raymond Depardon on *12 Days* or *France*, David Cronenberg on *Cosmopolis* and Asghar Farhadi on *The Past*). He reveals our DP’s lighting work on the movie and makes it sublime.

CONQUISTADOR

Carlos Cháirez and Alexander Andebi, from the band Conquistador, did the soundtrack of « Before Boys ». Carlos is a member and the songwriter of the world famous Mexican band *Tinki*. His music is widely broadcasted on TV shows and movies such as *The Book of Life*, *Man on Fire*, *Thirteen*, *The Rocker*, *Nip Tuck*, *NCIS*, *the Alias*, *Dexter*, *Gossip Girl* or *Weeds*.

CAST AND CREW

Filmmaker

Florence Faure

1st Assistant Director

Auguste Bas

Script

Yael Goldberg

Director of Photography

Mathieu Vié

1st Camera Assistant

Raphaël Aprikian

2nd Camera Assistant

Tom Haudry

1st Camera Assistant Team B

Félix Sulejmanoski

1st Camera Assistant Team C

Tom Haudry

2nd Cam Assist. Team B

P-V. Ferdani

Gaffer

Timothy Barouk

Electricians

Nathan Morinet

Eric Kirchhoffer

Key Grip

Manon Naudot

Camera Operator

Arthur Monfrais

Sound Engineer

Malo Thouément

Boom Operators

Clovis Tisserand

Guillaume André

Sound Engineer Team B

Colin Barthe

Boom Operator Team B

Nicolas Laurent

Music Composer

Conquistador

Assistant Production

Elhadj Sidibe

Art Director

Natalia Mladenovic

Make-up Artist

Johanna Quarré

Location Managers

Marianne Chaigneau, Victoria knights, Joe Sobel, Jaja

Stunt Coordinator

Ossama Kinessi

Editors

Delphine Genest

Eric Basset

Vincent Tabailon

With the support of Sylvie Hurat, Eric Peltier and Todd Darling

Assistant Editor

Julie Trillo

2d Assistant Editor

Lucile Irigoyen

Colorist

Karim El Katari

Sound Editor

Claire Berriet

Music Editor

Jody Stillwater

Sound Mixer

Benjamin Lecuyer

CAST

Claire

Asia Amans

Myriam

Zoé Millet

Aurore

Lou Noérie

Prune

Lou Malek-Brière

The Big Bad Wolf

Richard Fériot

Claire's father

Stéphane Mercoyrol

Prune's mother

Claude Coustou

Marc

Ianis Sack

Aurore's target

Romain Sarkissian

Myriam's target

Raphael Sack

Prune's target

Walter Shnorkell

The girlfriend

Léa Rinaldi

The target's friend

Charles Morel

The boys on the phone

Renely Alfred

Leo Lambese

Jarod Levy

Halim Akitar

Julien Chaigneau

