

LAST SUMMER

By Monica Flory

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CHARACTERS

All the characters are between thirteen and fifteen years old, between the eighth and ninth grade at school.

RYAN	The guitar player who is not into sports
TAMAR	The environmentalist who occasionally exaggerates
TYLER	The one who wants to be an athlete and a prankster
SAMANTHA	The one who really, really loves camp and wants to be a C.I.T.
JT	The sensitive one with a complicated family
BECKY	The one the boys like and the girls are jealous of
SARAH	The new girl who is more conservative than other kids at camp
EVAN	The smart kid, who is not ashamed that he loves chess
MELANIE	The shy girl no one notices
CRAIG	The crazy artist who treats life as a party
SYD	The basketball player who is cool and aloof
AMBER	The tough one who didn't want to come to camp in the first place
DONNA	The one who wants to get kissed and make good friends
JOSH	The one who is obsessed with the Rubik's cube and gets picked on
MIKE	The new guy who can't relate to the other guys in the group
MARIA	The track star who is incredibly focused on her goals

PROP LIST

Camp gear: duffel bags, backpacks, flashlights, photographs, posters, etc.

Sleeping bags and pillows

Rubik's cube

Cameras

Color War paraphernalia: red and blue bandanas, tee-shirts, face paint, etc.

Sweatshirts (Evan, JT, Craig)

Lanyards

Sketch books (2) and pencils

Bug spray

Guitar

Chess set

Basketball

Bow & arrow

Writing paper, pen, various letters

Water bottle

Badminton rackets (2) and birdie

Camp bunk activities: walkman, deck of cards, etc.

Ouija board

Candy

Friendship bracelets

Pajamas (Josh)

White sheets (2)

Sneakers (Becky)

Color War debris: red & blue streamers, balloons, signs, banners, etc.

Trash bag

Small, smooth stone

TIME

Two weeks during the summer of 1987.

PLACE

A summer camp in upstate New York.

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET

The set for the original production, designed by Carl Tallent, consisted of two sets of bunk beds on wheels. One side of each one functioned as bunk beds for the cabin scenes; the other had a cabin façade. In the “Staying Up” scene, one bunk bed set was assigned to the girls’ cabin, and the other to the boys’.

Carl built a faux log that was used for the forest scenes (such as “Drawing Trees” and “The Set-Up”). The basketball court scenes were played on a bare stage with an offstage net; the actors aimed at an “X” taped on the off stage wall. The final scene, “Cleaning Up,” was played on a bare stage that was strewn with Color War trash.

Carl’s bunk beds were ideal, but a far simpler set could work. Sleeping bags on cubes, or even on the floor, might be enough to represent the cabins. Most of the scenes are short, so complicated set changes may interrupt the flow of scenes. Less is always more.

COSTUMES

Casual camp clothing is all that is needed. Since the play is set in 1987, you might wish to use 80's-style clothing from a thrift store, or neutral modern clothing with 80's accessories. For the original production, costume designer Lisa Jordan worked with the student costume assistants to tie-dye red and blue tee-shirts for Color War.

TRANSITIONS

The transition scenes are meant to facilitate scene changes. Depending on your performance space, they may be useful. If instead they make the piece too choppy, it is permissible to eliminate them completely.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

LAST SUMMER was first produced by Poly Prep Country Day School in Brooklyn, NY, opening January 16, 2009. It was directed by Monica Flory; the set design was by Carl Tallent; the lighting design was by David Higham; the costume design was by Lisa Jordan; the dramaturg was Laura Butchy; and the production stage manager was Michael McGrann. The cast was as follows:

RYAN	Abe Etkin
TAMAR	Arlene Gambino
TYLER	Abe Jacobs
DONNA	Emily Giurleo
CRAIG	Phillip Lawson
BECKY	Natasha Thaler
SARAH	Eleanor Womack
EVAN	Henry Weissberg
MELANIE	Brigitte Henderson
JT	Nick Safian
MIKE	Phillip Laskaris
AMBER	Kendra Selby
SAMANTHA	Bonnie Mai
JOSH	Chris Gomez
SYD	Karl Anderson
MARIA	Drew Lewis

For my father, who taught me to love green things. And of course for Poly students, my favorite actors and techies on the planet.

Do Not Copy

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ACT I

MAYBE THIS SUMMER

(Sunday afternoon—the first day of camp. Two bunks on either side of the stage: girls on one side and boys on the other. There are a few bunk beds, lots of duffle bags and backpacks. ALL the campers are involved in an activity: making beds, folding clothes, hanging up photographs and posters, arranging supplies, putting batteries in flashlights, etc. Each character addresses the audience with her/his line.)

RYAN: *(Sitting with the guitar, HE strums a chord before HE speaks.)*

It's the summer before ninth grade, and things are, uh... changing.

(Singing a la David Bowie.) Ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-changes...

TAMAR: Our friends are changing.

TYLER: Interests are changing.

DONNA: Loyalties are changing.

CRAIG: *(Relishing the thought.)* Girls' anatomies are changing.

Bodacious.

GIRLS: *(Stop what they're doing for a moment.)* EW!

CRAIG: Somebody had to say it. No offense, ladies.

BECKY: Boys, too. Some of them look way different than they did last summer.

SARAH: But some of us are new this summer. Hello!

EVAN: Our beliefs are changing. Our sense of the world and where we fit in it.

MELANIE: Next summer we'll be too old to come to camp. It's the summer before ninth grade.

JT: Ninth grade is when your grades start counting toward getting into college.

MIKE: It's when you start praying you'll make varsity.

AMBER: It's the year you get an official curfew.

SAMANTHA: This is the summer you decide if you're going to apply to be a Counselor-In-Training next year.

JOSH: *(Brandishing his Rubik's cube.)* This is the summer when we figure out how to solve the things that are driving us absolutely crazy!

SYD: This is the summer when everyone waits to see who pairs up with who. Wait—naw, that's every summer.

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MARIA: Basically, it's important, okay? It's the last summer of camp.

MELANIE: Maybe this is the summer...

(A fantasy sequence in which all the GIRLS gather around MELANIE and try to get their picture taken with her.)

TAMAR: I want to get my picture taken with Melanie!

BECKY: Me too! I want a picture of me and Melanie!

MELANIE: For sure, girls. I'll get pictures with all of you. Save some film!

SAMANTHA: Will you sign my autograph book? Please!?!?

MELANIE: For sure. Don't have a cow.

DONNA: I want to make sure I have your address so I can write you a letter every day.

MARIA: Me, too!

MELANIE: Send me your doubles, okay?

DONNA: Totally.

SARAH: Mel, can I French braid your hair?

MELANIE: Later. It's all grody.

AMBER: It is so not.

RYAN: *(Approaching from the boys' cabin.)* Uh, Melanie. I'm really scared to ask you, but will you dance with me? You know, at the dance?

MELANIE: Maybe. I mean, it's not until tomorrow night. I haven't totally decided yet.

RYAN: Okay, well, uh... I guess the other guys wanted to ask you, too.

(MELANIE looks over, to see all the other GUYS smiling sheepishly at her and waving.)

THE GIRLS: *(except MELANIE; Impressed.)* Wow, Melanie! *(Giggling and much admiring of MELANIE. She smiles. Life is good.)*

TYLER: Maybe this is the summer...

(Fantasy sequence in which BOYS are decked out in red and blue, post Color War. THEY are disheveled and exhausted. In blue: CRAIG, MIKE, JOSH, and SYD. In red: TYLER, RYAN, JT, EVAN.)

RED BOYS: Red rules! Red rules! Red rules! Red rules!

MIKE: I can't believe it—you guys said that Red never wins.

CRAIG: Not until this year!

EVAN: Eat our shorts, Blue!

SYD: I have to admit, you guys were bad. And by that, I mean awesome.

JT: We couldn't have done it without our MVP.

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RYAN: Our what?

JT: Duh—our Most Valuable Player.

RYAN: Sorry, I don't do sports.

JOSH: Who's your MVP?

JT: Only the person who captured every flag, kicked butt in every single relay, and buried all of Blue's jerseys by the lake.

ALL BOYS: Tyler Lamason!

TYLER: Aw, shucks.

EVAN: Tyler, admit it!

TYLER: No—I really couldn't have done it without all of you.

SYD: He's so modest.

RYAN: (*Chanting.*) Tyler Lamason, MVP!

ALL BOYS: Tyler Lamason, MVP! Tyler Lamason, MVP!

ALL GIRLS: (*Emerge from the girls' cabin with ridiculous cheerleading moves.*) Tyler, Tyler, he's our man, if he can't do it, no one can!

(*The BOYS hoist TYLER onto their shoulders, chanting. Now the fantasies happen in rapid succession, switching quickly from one to the next.*)

JOSH: Maybe this is the summer...

(*JOSH is playing with the Rubik's cube, when BECKY approaches him, watching intently.*)

BECKY: Josh, oh my gawd, that is so fascinating. Can I just watch you?

JOSH: Sure, if you want.

BECKY: You're a genius.

SAMANTHA: Maybe this is the summer...

TAMAR: Sam, I just heard the counselors talking secretly in their bunk, and they said they think you would make the best Counselor-in-Training. You're a shoo-in for CIT next summer!

SAMANTHA: Did you really hear that? Oh, it's gonna be perfect!

CRAIG: Maybe this is the summer...

MIKE: Okay, that prank totally rocked! Did you plan it?

CRAIG: Just planned it, organized it, got everyone stoked to the max, executed it, and stayed humble the whole time. No biggie.

MIKE: You're my hero, man.

BECKY & EVAN: Maybe this is the summer...

(*BECKY and EVAN walk out of their cabins into a fantasy sequence.*)

BECKY: Maybe...

EVAN: Maybe...

BECKY: This is our fifth year at camp together.

EVAN: Don't you feel we've sort-of grown closer over the years?

BECKY: You get smarter every year.

EVAN: You get smarter and prettier. And taller.

BECKY: I know you're not supposed to just come out and say you like someone...

EVAN: ...but I do!

BECKY: Me, too!

EVAN: This is so perfect!

BECKY: All these years of knowing each other, and we get together during the last summer of camp.

EVAN: Do you want to wear my sweatshirt?

BECKY: Yes.

(Ceremoniously, SHE takes his sweatshirt as an offering.)

Do you want to sit by the lake during free time? And we can just be nervous together, but not talk?

EVAN: *(Serious, reverential.)* Yeah, I really want that. I'll come by your cabin during free time?

BECKY: Yeah?

EVAN: Yeah.

BECKY: Is this my fantasy sequence, or is it yours?

EVAN: I don't even know!

BECKY: That's so romantic!

EVAN: Yeah.

(The fantasy dissolves. BECKY reluctantly tosses EVAN's sweatshirt back into the boys' cabin.)

CRAIG: Yeah, I definitely forgot my deodorant. Any of you fresh-smelling young men have some I can borrow?

SAMANTHA: Does anyone mind if I put up this picture of my boyfriend?

(SHE unfolds a poster of George Michael, or some other 1987 pop star.)

RYAN: Our last summer. Man, I can't believe it.

(ALL exit except for SAMANTHA and CRAIG.)

SAMANTHA AND CRAIG SPEAK

(SAMANTHA and CRAIG address the audience, unaware of each other.)

SAMANTHA: When camp is over, I always go through major withdrawal.

CRAIG: The last day of camp is such a head rush!

SAMANTHA: Last summer, we had the coolest hippie counselors—Amy and Tree. Tree wasn't his real name, but he wouldn't tell us his real name. It was so cool! They were all Buddhist, like, "we want you to be totally in the moment and have the experience we're having. Just be here now." They actually got us to meditate, even the boys.

CRAIG: They used to have Color War for a whole week, but the parents complained about all the concussions. So now everything happens on one long day. They split up your cabin group into the teams—Red and Blue. Once you go to camp, you're always on the same team, every single year.

SAMANTHA: Two summers ago, which was, like, 1985, there was this preppy girl, Jen. And she had scoliosis, so she had to wear this major back brace, like, all the time. But she was really nice, and so pretty, and everyone was always like "what's it like with the brace?" and she was like, "it's pretty hard sometimes." She never came back to camp, which I don't think had anything to do with the scoliosis. Everyone loved her.

CRAIG: I'm on Blue. True Blue! Which is awesome, because Blue wins almost every year. So, on the day of Color War, you get up at, like 4 AM to get ready. Guys go crazy—spray-painting their high-tops, giving themselves marker tatoos, dying their hair blue. By 5 AM, our team looks like an army of angry Smurfs.

SAMANTHA: Three summers ago, 1984. I was really popular that year; I don't even know why. I guess we were into the whole Madonna thing, and I had all of it: the lace gloves, miniskirts, legwarmers, fishnets. My mom didn't know I bought fishnets. We wore all that stuff to the dance, and when they played a Madonna song, we danced and sang like crazy.

CRAIG: You're just walking to breakfast or something, and the captains are on the roof of the dining hall, screaming "COLOR WAR!" and one of the guys is like "RED ROCKS!" and the other one is like, "TRUE BLUE!" And you just start screaming your head off. This totally primal thing comes over you, and every single minute you just think about how you're gonna destroy them.

SAMANTHA: Four summers ago was my first year at camp. My parents had just split up, and I was totally bummed and homesick, so I don't really remember too much.

CRAIG: And we're totally spazzing out, like: "Blue is true! Blue blood flows from my head to my shoe!" And you know on some level it's completely stupid, but everyone's doing it, and it doesn't even matter how stupid you sound.

SAMANTHA: When you're back at school, you want to keep saying, "remember that time when...?" But you realize they won't remember, because no one from your school goes to your camp. So I try to tell my mom, and she's like "why is it such a big deal?" and I'm like, "it's my lifeline. It's the way I get through the rest of the crappy year."

CRAIG: At the end, everyone gets all emotional, whether you win or lose. People cry and stuff. That night is the bonfire and dance, and you might even dance with a girl because... whatever, it's the last night of camp, and Color War was awesome, and it's over, and you fought like a man.

TRANSITION: LANYARDS

(SARAH and AMBER are weaving lanyards into key chains.)

SARAH: So... this is cool. I know it's only the second day, but I really like camp so far. Crafts are really awesome, don't you think?

AMBER: No.

SARAH: Well, maybe not awesome, but I think these will be really useful as key chains. Stylish and practical, as they say. Don't you think so?

AMBER: No.

SARAH: Amber, since we're just getting to know each other, why don't you tell me something interesting about yourself.

AMBER: I'd like you to stop talking.

DRAWING TREES

(CRAIG and TYLER are sketching in books.)

CRAIG: No, the best prank was when they put Saran Wrap between the trees, and all those little kids ran right into it. *(HE demonstrates.)* Genius! It was like dominoes. Oh yeah, and they were like "it's a force field" and the little kids believed them.

TYLER: No, remember when they hid the dog doo under the beds, and in the cabin rafters? So the counselors found it under the beds, and they were like, "aha!" and then it still smelled at the end of camp. That was fresh.

CRAIG: Yeah, and they didn't even find the poop in the rafters until the next year. It was like petrified crap. Still, the Saran Wrap was inspired.

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TYLER: We have to think of something good this year.

CRAIG: Don't worry—I got it.

TYLER: No, I'm completely stoked. I've been thinking about it for years.

CRAIG: I'm the prank master at my school. I've been voted the one to do senior prank already.

TYLER: Don't trouble yourself. I'll figure it out.

CRAIG: Okay, it's based on whoever has the best drawing. Let me see yours.

TYLER: It's good.

CRAIG: Mine too.

(MELANIE enters, sits, and draws quietly. SHE is not noticed by TYLER or CRAIG.)

TYLER: I got a natural advantage.

CRAIG: What's that?

TYLER: I'm dyslexic.

CRAIG: That helps?

TYLER: My brain is wired so that I can do pictures better than words.

CRAIG: Yeah? Well, my mom's an art teacher. So I have the genes.

Which is good, because I suck at the rest of school.

TYLER: Me, too.

(THEY draw for a moment.)

CRAIG: You know Becky?

TYLER: Everybody knows Becky.

CRAIG: She draws. I saw some of her stuff. It's pretty decent.

TYLER: Oh, yeah?

CRAIG: I mean, I could go out with her if I wanted.

TYLER: Yeah, right. Everybody likes Becky.

CRAIG: Yeah. So you hate reading, right?

TYLER: No, I just suck at it.

CRAIG: *(Looking at TYLER'S drawing.)* You're okay at drawing, though.

TYLER: *(Looking at CRAIG'S drawing.)* Yeah, you're not half as bad as I thought you would be.

TRANSITION: BUG SPRAY

(TAMAR and SARAH. TAMAR holds a giant can of bug spray.)

TAMAR: Okay. Hold your breath.

(SARAH holds her breath. TAMAR showers her with bug spray. SARAH coughs, spits.)

You'll thank me after the hike.

THE SET-UP

(DONNA, RYAN, and AMBER are sitting on logs in the woods, just off the basketball courts. RYAN has his guitar as usual, and occasionally plays some riffs on it during the scene.)

DONNA: Well, here's the problem, see...

RYAN: What?

DONNA: It's kind of embarrassing.

AMBER: Go on—you can do it.

DONNA: I haven't been...

RYAN: ...feeling well?

DONNA: I haven't been...

RYAN: ...myself lately?

DONNA: Kissed! I haven't ever been kissed!

AMBER: Good job.

RYAN: Uh, no big deal. You shouldn't feel bad.

DONNA: Oh, well, I was hoping...

AMBER: Can you see where this is going?

RYAN: I'm not exactly positive.

AMBER: She wants to kiss you, you dweeb!

RYAN: Oh. Really? Uh... *(To AMBER.)* Are you gonna watch?

DONNA: No!

AMBER: Really?

DONNA: Yes!

AMBER: Okay.

DONNA: No, she's not going to watch at all. She's just here to...

AMBER: *(Cutting her off.)* Seal the deal.

RYAN: Oh, well that's...

AMBER: So, are you gonna do it? Just say yes.

RYAN: I don't know... I've never been asked like that... I mean, it's kind of...

AMBER: Look, let me spell this out for you. Donna has been going here for five years, and she never gets kissed after the dance. It's time, don't you think? So, congratulations! She picked you as the nicest and least-gross of the boys in our unit.

RYAN: Uh, thanks?

DONNA: Not just least-gross. Not gross at all.

RYAN: *(To DONNA.)* Do you...? *(Then to AMBER.)* Does she like me?

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AMBER: Not exactly.

DONNA: Not-not exactly.

AMBER: She wants to be kissed before high school, and you're her top choice.

RYAN: Can I think about it?

DONNA: Sure! Yes, definitely. Think all you want.

AMBER: No! It's now or never, my friend.

DONNA: Okay, I think you should go.

AMBER: *(Pulling DONNA aside.)* It might not happen if I go.

DONNA: It's definitely not happening if you stay.

AMBER: Okay, killjoy. Bye, Ryan.

RYAN: Bye.

(AMBER winks exaggeratedly at DONNA, and leaves.)

DONNA: Okay, so...

RYAN: That was weird.

DONNA: Yeah, but I think she's right. I really think we should.

RYAN: Okay. Sure.

DONNA: Do you want to start or should I?

RYAN: Um, you start. Does one person have to start it?

DONNA: I think so. Yeah, definitely.

RYAN: You can start.

DONNA: Or maybe later, or whatever.

RYAN: Sure, whatever you want.

(Pause.)

DONNA: So, are you gonna be a CIT next year?

RYAN: I don't know—probably not.

DONNA: Oh.

RYAN: I mean, it depends on the band and if we can get it together to do some kind of...

(DONNA leans in to kiss him, closes her eyes, and misses. SHE kisses the air or his shoulder.)

DONNA: Oh my gawd.

RYAN: You sorta missed.

DONNA: I have to go.

(She runs off. RYAN is bewildered.)

TRANSITION: THE HIKE

(Several CAMPERS are hiking. THEY have reached the top of a hill.)

SARAH: My mouth still tastes like bugspray. And I have thirty-seven mosquito bites.

TAMAR: *(Scratching her own legs.)* We probably didn't put enough on.

BECKY: Wow, so I guess we're at the top.

MELANIE: Thanks for waiting for me, everyone.

(THEY look out over the mountain. The view is stunning. Various reactions: boredom, exhaustion, interest. MIKE soaks it in, truly cherishing the view. EVERYONE else exits, but MIKE remains.)

MIKE: Amazing.

CHECK MATE

(EVAN and JT are playing chess on the basketball courts.)

EVAN: My dad says Reagan's a bully. Did you hear when he was like, "Mr. Gorbach, tear down this wall!"

JT: Check.

EVAN: Not so fast. *(Moves a chess piece.)* I mean, do you think we're headed for World War Three? My mom thinks so, if we're not careful.

JT: My sister says as long as Russians and Americans both love their kids, it won't happen. Which is pretty deep, right?

EVAN: Yeah, I guess so. *(About chess.)* This game is rad. Okay, what would you do if there was this huge mushroom cloud and we had, like, an hour to live?

JT: Dunno.

EVAN: Yeah, me neither.

JT: *(About the chess game.)* Check. *(Back to politics.)* If Gorbach sends a bomb over, Reagan will get on the red phone and send one back. So at least we'll get even.

EVAN: How are you still winning, when I'm the better chess player? *(Moves a piece.)*

JT: Check, suckah.

(SYD enters, carrying a basketball.)

SYD: Hey.

EVAN: Hey.

SYD: You guys seen Mike and Craig?

JT: Nope.

SYD: I'm gonna shoot hoops now.

EVAN: Okay.

SYD: So get off the court.

JT: The counselors won't let us stay in the bunks during free time and I'm allergic to grass. And dirt, pretty much.

EVAN: Go ahead—shoot. There's plenty of room.

SYD: You're sitting on the three-point line!

JT: We're almost done with this game. Just give us a minute.

SYD: Get off! (*HE nudges JT with his foot.*)

EVAN: Did you just kick him? Why did you kick him?

(*SYD kicks over the chessboard.*)

SYD: I told you to get off the court! So get off the court!

(*EVAN stands up, ready to fight. SYD stares him down. HE throws the basketball at EVAN, who does not catch it.*)

Think fast.

(*Because EVAN doesn't catch it.*)

Oh, that's sad. (*HE retrieves the ball.*) I can see why you'd rather play chess with your little boyfriend. Do you like boys, Evan? Is JT your little boyfriend? I hope you have fun with your little games.

Think fast.

(*SYD fakes out EVAN, but doesn't throw the ball at him. EVAN is a little startled, and SYD laughs at him.*)

JT, I think I scared your little boyfriend. Maybe you should kiss him and make it all better.

(*SYD goes off, calling after the others.*)

Yo, Mike! Craig!

EVAN: Wow, fun. Great guy.

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(A pause. EVAN calmly picks up the board, but JT is shaken as HE picks up the chess pieces.)

You know how Gorbechav has that big stain on his head? I just find the headstain so distracting. Don't you? Whenever my parents watch the news, I just think, "it's alive! It's alive!"

(Pause. No reaction from JT.)

You could laugh or something.

JT: What do you think he meant?

EVAN: Nothing—whatever. Who cares.

JT: He thinks you're my boyfriend.

EVAN: I'm not? I'm crushed. I thought we were deeply in love. Why are you letting him get to you?

JT: I'm not. He's not getting to me. But I'm not your boyfriend.

EVAN: Okay, already. Yes, I get it. Why are you making it into this big thing?

JT: *(Still visibly upset.)* Nothing. No reason.

EVAN: Okay. Whatever. Are we going to play somewhere else or what?

JT: Maybe later.

(EVAN goes off with the board; JT follows.)

TRANSITION: ARCHERY

(AMBER winds up and shoots an arrow offstage. SHE hits someone, who might scream.)

AMBER: Oh, sorry about that.

(SHE runs off.)

AFTER DINNER

(TAMAR chases MARIA out of the dining hall.)

TAMAR: I said I needed to talk to you. That means you should stop running away.

MARIA: I didn't hear you. What?

TAMAR: Why'd you tell everyone at dinner?

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MARIA: What?

TAMAR: You know what.

MARIA: No I don't.

TAMAR: "Tamar pretends she's a vegetarian, but she's a total poser. I've seen her eat meat."

MARIA: Yeah—so?

TAMAR: It's not their business.

MARIA: What do you mean?

TAMAR: You saw me eat meat at school, and it was a long time ago. Whatever goes on at school doesn't count here.

MARIA: Oh, so you can just lie to other people because they're at camp instead of school?

TAMAR: It's not lying. I've been vegetarian since the last day of school last year.

MARIA: Okay, whatever.

TAMAR: Ever since the first day of camp, you've been talking about school. You don't have any right to tell anyone what goes on at our school.

MARIA: I don't have the right? Since when do you get to decide what I have the right to do?

TAMAR: Since I started going to this camp in third grade. You came for the first time last year.

MARIA: I used to think you were really nice. Now it's like you don't even want to be around me.

TAMAR: Maybe if you weren't telling all my secrets.

MARIA: How is that a secret? Anyway, I was just kidding. Everyone laughed. It's not a big deal.

TAMAR: I'm almost always vegetarian during the school year, and I'm always vegetarian at camp. It's how these people know me. You know, I've gotten into environmental activism and stuff, and it's really important to me. When you bring up burgers, it makes me sound fake.

MARIA: You are fake! You're a burger-eating vegetarian!

TAMAR: At least I have friends here. You spend all day running so you don't have to admit that if you stopped, no one would want to hang out with you.

MARIA: It's nice that you could make friends with Sarah, because she's new. I always feel bad for you that you don't have friends at school. Too bad it's the last summer of camp.

TAMAR: I wish you had never come here.

MARIA: I won't talk about school anymore because no one cares. Nobody cares if you're a tree-hugger or a girl who swims with dolphins. Nobody cares if you eat a stupid burger or you don't.

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(THEY stare each other down for a moment. DONNA and SAMANTHA are walking from dinner, and THEY approach them.)

DONNA: Hey, girls.

MARIA: Hey.

(Silence.)

SAMANTHA: Great fries at dinner, right?

(No response.)

But the burgers were kind of gross, right?

TAMAR: Yes! Exactly!

MARIA: Tamar wouldn't know. She's a vegetarian this week.

(MARIA and TAMAR go storming off in opposite directions.)

SAMANTHA: What was that about?

DONNA: No clue. Can you braid my hair? That way it won't get all tangled for nightswim.

SAMANTHA: French or regular?

DONNA: Can you do French?

SAMANTHA: I think so. Here, sit.

(DONNA sits; SAMANTHA braids her hair.)

Won't it be so amazing when we're counselors and we can actually be in charge of the nightswim? I can't wait! We're only, like, 11 and a half months away from being C.I.T.s!

DONNA: Yeah, that's cool.

SAMANTHA: I think I'm gonna get my lifeguarding, too.

DONNA: Yeah—I mean, being a C.I.T. would be cool. I know we've been planning on it and stuff.

SAMANTHA: Yeah—four years of planning.

DONNA: I don't know—I've been thinking about it a lot.

SAMANTHA: You don't want to be a C.I.T.?

DONNA: I'm thinking about taking a year off from camp.

SAMANTHA: But camp is the best part of the summer.

DONNA: Yeah—but, like, none of the guys are going to be here next summer.

SAMANTHA: Who? You don't even like any of them.

DONNA: I was just kind-of talking to Ryan...

SAMANTHA: You like Ryan?

DONNA: I told you that.

SAMANTHA: No, you didn't.

DONNA: On the first day of camp! I said, "he's kind of cute."

SAMANTHA: No, I would remember.

DONNA: Anyway, Ryan said he's going to be with his band or something.

SAMANTHA: So? There will be new guys. Hot C.I.T. guys! (*SHE pulls too hard on DONNA'S hair.*)

DONNA: Ow!

SAMANTHA: Sorry. Come on, you have to. We've gone to camp together every single year since fourth grade. I'll die if I'm here without you.

DONNA: Maybe one of the other girls from our cabin will do it. Maybe Melanie or Sarah or someone.

SAMANTHA: Maybe, but they're not my camp best friend like you are.

DONNA: Yeah, I mean, I don't even know what I might do next summer. I might go to New York City or something crazy like that.

SAMANTHA: Why? Did Amber invite you?

DONNA: No, I was just randomly saying that I want to go to the city again because I haven't been there since I was, like, five. And Amber just happened to be there and she said maybe I could stay with her family for a couple of weeks.

SAMANTHA: So she did invite you. (*Pulls too hard.*)

DONNA: Ow!

SAMANTHA: Sorry.

DONNA: Well, not really. We just started talking about it and...

SAMANTHA: In four years, you've never told me that you wanted to go to New York City.

DONNA: It never came up, I guess.

SAMANTHA: Sure. I see how it is. (*SHE leaves DONNA's hair half-braided.*)

DONNA: Are you gonna finish this later?

RAINING AGAIN

(ALL are hanging out in the GIRLS' bunk. Some are looking mournfully through the windows.)

AMBER: I can't believe it's raining for the third day in a row.

SARAH: I think it's kind of fun to be inside! It's cozy, right?

AMBER: Please shut up. Please.

DONNA: I hope it doesn't rain for Color War!

MIKE: What's Color War?

CRAIG: Only the greatest event that happens at camp.

MIKE: Oh. That explains it.

RYAN: It's all these games and contests on the last full day of camp.

SARAH: Oooh, I can't wait!

BECKY: It rained a couple of years ago. It was totally lame.

AMBER: Say—has anyone seen our lovely counselors lately?

SARAH: Not since lunch.

SYD: They're probably going to get fired. The camp director found them messing around in the back of the mess hall.

SARAH: Grody!

AMBER: (*Amused.*) You're lying! Oh, it's too good.

BECKY: It's obviously just a rumor. Karen has a boyfriend back at college. She showed me a picture of him.

SYD: I'm just telling you what I heard.

SAMANTHA: Scandal-o-rama!

MARIA: If that's true, this is officially the worst summer ever.

AMBER: How did we get stuck with the hoser counselors in our last year?

CRAIG: Major injustice!

BECKY: At least we have the dance.

RYAN: Always the most interesting part of the week. Besides Color War.

JT: Josh, are you still working on that thing?

JOSH: I'm making major progress.

AMBER: So, what are we going to do for prank this year?

SARAH: Oooh, fun! Who are we pranking?

AMBER: Okay, could you dial it down a few notches, Susie Q?

RYAN: The ninth-graders always do some kind of prank on the camp.

The directors pretend they don't like it, but it's tradition.

CRAIG: Yeah, they totally love it. Last year's sucked, though.

SYD: Yeah. Last year, all the guys dressed like the girls, and vice-versa. Totally stupid.

DONNA: I thought it was pretty funny.

EVAN: It did get interesting at swim.

BECKY: Yeah.

SAMANTHA: I don't care what we do, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone.

CRAIG: I think we should do something sweet to help our fellow friendly campers. Psych!

TAMAR: We definitely shouldn't hurt any animals. Or bugs. Or use leather.

TYLER: Craig and I have a ton of ideas. We'll take care of it.

MARIA: All in favor of letting the guys plan prank?

AMBER: No way—I want to do it, too.

MARIA: All in favor of letting the guys and Amber plan prank?

BECKY: Why not? Sure.

THE LETTER

(SAMANTHA and MIKE are at the basketball court. MIKE is shooting hoops and SAMANTHA has writing paper and a pen.)

SAMANTHA: Don't worry—I've been going to this camp forever, and I always write tons of letters. So I'm kind of a professional at it.

MIKE: What did you write so far?

SAMANTHA: "Hi Mike's Mom, it's Samantha. I'm writing for Mike because I have really nice handwriting, and you told him that his is like chicken scratch."

MIKE: Okay, that's weird, but okay.

SAMANTHA: Do you have a dad?

MIKE: He doesn't live with us.

(SYD enters.)

SYD: Are we playing?

MIKE: Samantha is making me write to my Mom.

SYD: A momma's boy. How sweet. Horse?

MIKE: Samantha, can we do this later?

SAMANTHA: I'll be busy later. I promise you won't be sorry. I've been working on my handwriting and I have finally perfected the tiny hearts above my lower-case "l"s and the slanty line on my lower-case "e"s. Your mom will love it.

SYD: (*Mocking SAMANTHA.*) Yeah, Mike. Your mom will love it.

(SYD and MIKE start playing horse.)

MIKE: Okay, write this: "Dear Mom, Camp is fun. See you soon. Your Son, Mike."

SAMANTHA: Okay, you have to write more than that. Your mom will want details. How about, "After a whole week of rain, it finally stopped. I am feeling very soggy."

MIKE: Naw. Maybe you should write about the hike yesterday.

SAMANTHA: Okay—how about: "We went on a hike. It was kind of boring and my feet hurt."

MIKE: No, you should say it was fun. My feet don't hurt.

SAMANTHA: Are you sure?

MIKE: Yes! They're my feet!

SYD: “I went on a stupid hike and the trees looked exactly the same as the ones at camp.”

MIKE: No, tell her I love camp. Tell her it’s great.

SAMANTHA: Why are you lying to your own mother?

MIKE: What?

SAMANTHA: It’s not really fun. It’s a drag this year. It’s nothing like last summer.

SYD: Yeah, you should have been here last summer.

MIKE: I wasn’t here last summer, so how would I know?

SAMANTHA: You know because we’re telling you. How about “camp is not too bad”?

MIKE: No, I want to say what I said.

SAMANTHA: Okay, fine. “Camp is really not too bad. It’s good, even.”
Next?

MIKE: Tell her about Frisbee golf and archery. Tell her about sketching in the woods. That was cool.

SYD: Okay, that was not cool.

SAMANTHA: You don’t have to sugarcoat things for your own mother.

MIKE: I’m not.

SAMANTHA: Then why are you pretending like everything is peachy keen when it’s awful? We have the worst counselors ever and it rains, like, every single day! The only thing we have to look forward to is the dance, and it’s—

MIKE: Okay, okay—maybe it’s easy for your parents to send you to camp, but my mom has to work hard to make the money to send me here. And I do like it! I could be working for practically no money, bussing tables or babysitting like my friends at home are—or I could be here, learning how to draw trees. And I’m not going to make up some kind of drama to make things worse when my mom has to work and take care of my two little sisters all week just so that I can be here, drawing trees. Thanks for your help, but I’ll write my own chickenscratch letter.

(HE grabs the pen and paper from SAMANTHA and starts to leave. SHE doesn’t know what to say. HE turns back and throws her the pen.)

Here—you can keep this. You can write your own mother about how rough you have it.

(HE exits. SAMANTHA exits.)

(SYD is practicing on the basketball court when MARIA runs by.)

SYD: Hey--what's chasing you?

MARIA: What? Nothing.

SYD: It's a joke.

MARIA: Oh, funny. *(Referring to his water bottle.)* Any water in there?

SYD: Yeah--go ahead.

MARIA: Thanks. *(SHE drinks.)*

(EVAN and JT walk past the courts, carrying badminton rackets and birdies.)

EVAN: Hey guys.

MARIA: Hey.

SYD: Lovebirds! Playing a little badminton there?

EVAN: Why, yes we are.

SYD: JT, is Evan your little love-birdie?

(JT and EVAN exit.)

MARIA: What was that about?

SYD: Nothing. Just messing around.

MARIA: You run?

SYD: A little.

MARIA: Track team?

SYD: No, just basketball.

MARIA: Oh. *(Pause.)* Don't you want to ask me if I play b-ball?

SYD: You're too short!

(HE is dribbling the ball and SHE steals it from him.)

MARIA: I have tall brothers.

SYD: Alright, alright. Very smooth.

(SHE throws the ball back to him.)

MARIA: Thank you.

SYD: But can you do this? *(HE does a trick with the basketball and then throws the ball back to her.)*

MARIA: Nope. Can you do this? *(She does an equally impressive trick.)*

SYD: Nice. You should play with us sometime. Mike and I usually shoot hoops every free time.

MARIA: (*Playful.*) I'm hoping to break some records this year. I don't really have time for this kid stuff.

SYD: Kid stuff? Oh, like running isn't girl stuff. "Oooh, chase me! Chase me!"

MARIA: That's how every good runner gets started. Boys chase girls at recess.

SYD: Boys chase girls! We played that, too.

MARIA: And the sequel: Girls chase boys.

SYD: The girls couldn't catch us.

MARIA: That's because I didn't go to your school.

SYD: Hey--can I ask you something?

MARIA: Shoot.

SYD: What's going on with Becky?

MARIA: I don't think she could even identify a basketball in a lineup of sports equipment.

SYD: Does she like someone?

MARIA: I don't know--I don't talk to her that much.

SYD: I mean, the dance is tomorrow. Could you ask her? But not tell her that I was asking?

MARIA: Sure.

SYD: Really?

MARIA: Yeah, if you can beat me.

SYD: At what?

MARIA: This. (*SHE runs off.*)

SYD: Oh, man. (*HE grabs the basketball and sprints after her.*)

STAYING UP

(*Nighttime. The BOYS and GIRLS are in their respective cabins. Some are in pajamas. Others are reading, brushing teeth, playing cards, listening to walkmans, writing letters, etc.*)

SARAH: (*To MARIA.*) So what are you wearing to the dance tomorrow?

MARIA: I don't know. Clothing.

SARAH: I think I'm going to wear my purple tank top with rhinestones. Do you want to see it?

MARIA: Not really. (*Realizing that this sounds unkind.*) You can show me tomorrow, okay? I have to go to sleep so that I can get up early to run.

BECKY: You guys, this is our next-to-next-to-last night of camp.

SARAH: Oh my gosh, I'm gonna miss you guys!

SAMANTHA: Yeah, we should do something fun.

BECKY: Exactly.

SARAH: Oooh! I know this game called “I’m going on a picnic!” The first person starts with “a”—like, I’m going on a picnic and I’m taking an apple. Or you can be crazy and say something like “I’m going on a picnic and I’m taking an... aardvark!” And then the next person takes “b,” but they have to say the “a” one first...

AMBER: (*Interrupting.*) Ooh! “I’m going back to Kindergarten and I’m taking my teddy bear and this annoying girl named Sarah!”

SARAH: Or we could do something else.

TAMAR: I brought cucumber face mask stuff. Like, the kind you peel off. We could do that.

SAMANTHA: I just read an article in YM that says most girls have combination skin and shouldn’t use the peel-off kind.

DONNA: Oooh! I have YM, too! And Seventeen. We could do quizzes.

AMBER: I brought an Ouija board.

BECKY: Now that actually sounds interesting.

SARAH: I’m probably not allowed.

MELANIE: We could do “light as a feather, stiff as a board.”

MARIA: I did it at a sleepover once—it doesn’t work.

MELANIE: You wanna bet?

BECKY: Oooh—who’s going first?

MELANIE: You are.

(*In the BOYS’ cabin.*)

RYAN: I had this dream about Tiffany, and she was all (*singing provocatively*) “I think we’re alone now...”

SYD: No, I can top that. I had one about Debbie Gibson, except she was twins. Two Debbies. Both naked.

RYAN: You’re full of it.

SYD: I swear. On my baby sister’s life.

MIKE: Are you guys gonna tell me the story already, or are you just gonna talk about Debbie Gibson all night?

EVAN: I’ll tell it.

JOSH: You don’t even believe in it!

RYAN: Let me tell it.

TYLER: Do you think it’s true?

RYAN: Sure. Yes. Why not?

MIKE: Alright, then. Get on with it!

RYAN: Okay, so it started a long, long time ago. Back when this area had a lot of mines.

JOSH: Coal mines.

RYAN: Yes, coal mines. So there were these miners—Bill and Stanley. They were these huge guys, totally ripped. And they worked with a

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ton of other miners. The work was grueling, so they were all really strong.

JOSH: Billy and Stanley were friends.

RYAN: Okay, whatever—and one day, while they were working, they heard this cracking sound. And then, all of the sudden, the mine just collapsed on them.

JOSH: It was the tunnel—just the tunnel collapsed on them.

SYD: Josh, will you shut up and let him tell the story?

JOSH: Sorry.

RYAN: When the tunnel collapsed, all the guys got stuck in there. They had a little bit of room to move around, but there was only a limited amount of oxygen. They had no food and water. So, one by one, the miners died. But Stan and Bill were really smart, and they stayed alive by drinking water that dripped into the tunnels. They ate the mushrooms they could find and even these little rats that scurried through the tunnel. And then one day, they got really, really hungry, and they were looking around at all the dead miners. So Stan just looked at Bill, and they made an unspoken pact...

EVAN: An “unspoken pact”?

JOSH: (*Really into the story.*) Shut up.

RYAN: Bill just nodded. And then they started eating the other miners.

TYLER: Cannibalism is cool.

SYD: See? That can't be true. No one's gonna eat someone else.

MIKE: That's disgusting. I'd starve first.

EVAN: Uh, ever heard of The Donner Party?

SYD: No.

EVAN: They ate each other, too.

(*Back in the GIRLS' cabin. AMBER is the middle of the group. SARAH is watching. MARIA is in her bunk.*)

GIRLS: (*except MARIA and SARAH*) Light as a feather, stiff as a board, light as a feather, stiff as...

AMBER: (*Popping up.*) Okay, this is not going to work.

TAMAR: You're not even giving it a chance.

AMBER: No, I know it's not.

SAMANTHA: She's too big.

AMBER: Okay, that's nice.

SAMANTHA: I don't mean fat. I just mean that you're a bigger person than the rest of us, and we're not strong enough.

DONNA: Yes, we are. Amber's not bigger than the rest of us.

SAMANTHA: I just mean that she's bigger than Becky. That's all.

MELANIE: That's mean.

SAMANTHA: Becky, is that mean?

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BECKY: Let's do something else. This is getting boring.

SARAH: It's just because Amber didn't believe in it and Becky did. It's basically a question of faith, and Becky has more.

MARIA: Does anyone care that I'm getting up at 5 AM to run?

SARAH: Sorry! We'll be quieter! Oooh... let's whisper!

AMBER: I know something to do that's real quiet.

(In the BOY'S cabin.)

SYD: Thanks, Evan, for that fascinating history lesson.

MIKE: That's more information than I ever wanted to know about the Donner Party. Can I hear the rest of the story now?

RYAN: Okay, so. All the other guys were dead when Bill and Stan started to dig themselves out. They dug like animals, sort of messed up because of not having enough oxygen. They had to dig for weeks, but they kept going because they thought that people were searching for them from the other side. But it turned out that everyone in the mining company thought they were dead, so no one was looking for them.

TYLER: Where was the mine that this happened in?

RYAN: Like, less than a mile from here.

(JOSH walks to his bunk and gets his pillow. HE holds it close to him for protection.)

EVAN: Yeah, right.

RYAN: When they finally dug themselves out, they couldn't even handle the sunlight anymore. They had been underground so long that their eyes turned completely pure white and even a tiny bit of sunlight would burn their pupils. So they could only go out at night.

EVAN: Classic ghost story.

TYLER: Shut up, nonbeliever!

RYAN: And when they found out that no one had tried to help them, they decided to take revenge on the town.

MIKE: How?

RYAN: Lots of people that had camped out in the woods woke up with bite marks on their arms and legs, and they got permanent scars. Then they started finding dead people, in the valleys. They bled to death because their arteries had been chewed open by human teeth.

JOSH: Yeah, and this camp was built on top of those mines.

SYD: Bull.

JOSH: I'll show you the sign. It's at the edge of camp property.

MIKE: I bet they just tell the little kids that to make them stay in the cabins at night.

(The GIRLS' cabin. Except for MARIA and SARAH, THEY are gathered around AMBER's Ouija board.)

AMBER: Great spirits of Bill and Stanley—we call on you. We are sorry for any wrongs the people of this land have caused you. Come to us. Tell us what you want us to know.

(To the other GIRLS.)

Now place your hands on it lightly, but don't move on purpose. Just let the spirits guide you.

DONNA: *(Whispers.)* But how does it move?

AMBER: You'll see.

(THEY ALL concentrate very hard. The game piece starts moving.)

BECKY: It's moving!

GIRLS: Shhhhh!

SAMANTHA: *(Reading what they are spelling.)* "H...", "I..."

BECKY: *(Whispers this time.)* It stopped.

MELANIE: No, it's moving again. "G!"

(THEY wait more. Nothing happens.)

SAMANTHA: "Hig?" What is that supposed to mean?

AMBER: Shush! You have to stay focused!

BECKY: Maybe it's the initials for something!

MARIA: Maybe the ghosts are telling you to be quiet so that I can sleep!

BECKY: Maybe they're telling you to loosen up!

(Back in the BOYS' cabin.)

JOSH: Ryan, can we lock the door tonight?

RYAN: Yeah, for sure.

JOSH: And close all the windows?

RYAN: If you want.

JOSH: *(Looking out the cabin window.)* I can see something! Two people with white eyes! Oh, we're gonna die!

SYD: Calm down, dude.

TYLER: It's probably our delinquent counselors.

JT: *(From offstage, in a whisper.)* Hey, you guys. Open the door!

(JOSH screams. EVAN opens the door.)

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CRAIG: The pirates have returned and we have the booty!

EVAN: Well, bring on the booty!

SYD: What are they talking about?

EVAN: I have no idea—but it sounds promising!

(JT and CRAIG unwrap their sweatshirts to reveal a huge stash of candy.)

MIKE: Where'd you get it?

TYLER: Heaven!

CRAIG: A little place called the camp store.

JOSH: You stole it?

EVAN: No, they didn't steal it. Technically, our parents paid for it.

JT: There was tons of stuff. We didn't take even half of it.

JOSH: You're gonna get in trouble. We're gonna get in trouble.

JT: No, we're not.

CRAIG: We already have a plan. We'll just eat everything and bury the evidence.

RYAN: Sounds good—let's eat.

(THEY pounce on the candy bars and eat in happy silence for a few beats. JOSH resists at first, but then HE gives in and has a candy bar.)

TYLER: Maybe we should share some with the girls.

SYD: *(Looking at the enormous stash of candy.)* Nah—I don't think we have enough.

EVAN: Good point.

(Lights up on the girls' cabin.)

TAMAR: I'm hungry.

DONNA: Yeah, I could really go for a Snickers bar.

BECKY: I wonder what the boys are doing.

SAMANTHA: They're probably asleep.

AMBER: Alright, who's up for truth or dare?

BECKY: Oooh, fun.

(Lights down on girls' cabin. Lights up on the boys' cabin.)

CRAIG: Who's playing truth or dare?

RYAN: Girl's game.

MIKE: No, it's way more fun with guys. The dares are better.

SYD: I'll play.

JT: Me, too.

(Lights up on girls. Lights stay up on boys.)

AMBER and CRAIG: *(AMBER to SARAH; CRAIG to JT)* Truth or dare?

SARAH: *(Simultaneously with JT)* Truth.

JT: *(Simultaneously with SARAH)* Dare! No, truth.

AMBER: *(Simultaneously with CRAIG)* Have you ever kissed a boy?

CRAIG: *(Simultaneously with AMBER)* Have you gotten to second base with a girl?

JT: Yes.

SARAH: I don't want to.

AMBER and EVAN: Liar!

SARAH: I'm not ready.

JT: Believe what you want, dudes.

AMBER: Who's next?

CRAIG: Leave the man alone.

MELANIE: I'll go.

(But no one hears her.)

DONNA and TYLER: I'm next.

SARAH: Truth or dare?

JT: Dare or truth?

TYLER: Dare.

DONNA: Truth.

JT: That's my man.

SARAH: Okay... um...

SYD: I thought Evan was your man.

JT: Shut up.

SARAH: Wait... um...

TAMAR: Do you need help?

TYLER: What's my dare? What should I do?

SARAH: Okay—what's the craziest thing you've ever done?

JT: You have to stuff an entire candy bar into your mouth and sing "Material Girl."

DONNA: Well, I...

TYLER: Okay. *(HE eats a candy bar.)*

DONNA: Oh! One time I went white-water rafting with my family.

AMBER: No, she means really crazy.

DONNA: I got a cavity filled without Novocain.

TYLER: *(Singing, cracking up, spitting candy.)* "We are living in a material world, and I am a material girl..."

DONNA: That's all I can think of. Sorry.

EVAN: Please make him stop!

TYLER: Are you going next?

AMBER: Bor-ing. Okay, who's next?

EVAN: Sure, whatever.

BECKY: I'll go.

DONNA and TYLER: Truth or dare?

BECKY and EVAN: Dare.

DONNA: Okay, I dare you to go to the boys' cabin...

TYLER: You have to knock on the door of the girls' cabin...

DONNA: And knock on the door...

DONNA and TYLER: ...and whoever answers...

DONNA: You have to kiss them.

TYLER: You have to pretend you like them.

BECKY: Lips or cheek?

EVAN: That's kind of mean.

DONNA: Either one.

TYLER: Okay, then. You just have to look her in the eye and say: "I think you're the most radical girl in all of camp."

BECKY: Okay.

EVAN: I'll try.

(BECKY and EVAN tentatively walk out of their cabins, with a flashlight. BOTH are looking at the ground. Then, simultaneously, THEY shine their flashlights on each other.)

BECKY and EVAN: Hey!

BECKY: What are you...

EVAN: Why are you out here?

BECKY: Oh, I was just...

EVAN: I took a walk.

BECKY: I thought I heard something.

(Pause. Silence.)

Well, I should...

EVAN: Yeah, me too.

(Both run back to their cabins. Lights out.)

(POSSIBLE INTERMISSION)

ACT II

THREE-LEGGED RACE

(Two pairs of campers rush by, tied together in a three-legged relay. There is squealing and trying to catch up. One pair passes the other pair.)

THE CUBE

(JOSH and MELANIE are tied together in the three-legged race. MELANIE is trying hard to catch up, but JOSH keeps working on the Rubik's cube, even as THEY are racing.)

MELANIE: JOSH! We're gonna lose to fourth-graders! Hurry up!

JOSH: What?

MELANIE: Leave the cube! Just drop the cube! Come on!

JOSH: I've almost got three sides. *(HE sits, completely sabotaging MELANIE'S attempts to continue.)*

MELANIE: What is wrong with you?!?! That relay counts toward Color War! We just lost twenty points for our team!

JOSH: So what?

MELANIE: You know, it's not all about you! You're having an impact on other people, you know! It's not just about you. *(SHE tries to free herself.)* UGH!

JOSH: Why do you even care about Color War? It's just a weird construct of camp life. They do all these wacky things to try to keep us amused, but it's just babysitting, really.

MELANIE: *(Beat.)* Okay, shut up. Just shut up! Just because you don't care about anything but a stupid piece of plastic.

JOSH: It's not stupid. It's an intellectual exercise. I'm building brain cells and honing my fine motor skills.

MELANIE: "Sure, I'll be with Josh," I said. "No, I don't mind, no problem." Well, it's a problem. Trying to actually be on your team is a problem! You don't even understand what it means to work with someone.

JOSH: Are you finished yet?

MELANIE: No! You're obsessed with a toy. It's not healthy, you know.

JOSH: It's not a toy. It's a game.

MELANIE: So what if you finally solve it? What then?

JOSH: I'll be happy. And smarter.

MELANIE: Meanwhile, you're going to miss camp. It's our last summer, you know. You're never going to be at this camp ever again, so maybe you should try to actually be here while you're here. Maybe you should try to learn how to be a reasonable normal person who doesn't drive everyone crazy.

JOSH: (*Pause.*) Are you done now?

MELANIE: Yes. No! You're impossible! Now, I'm done.

JOSH: (*Back to the cube.*) Goodbye, Melanie.

MELANIE: UGH! (*MELANIE leaves in a huff.*)

BECKY AND SARAH

(*SARAH is making a friendship bracelet in the bunk. BECKY is staring at the door.*)

SARAH: Are you waiting for someone?

BECKY: I guess Syd wanted to shoot hoops or something.

SARAH: Do you play basketball?

BECKY: Not really—he was going to teach me.

SARAH: Oh, lucky you. What's it like?

BECKY: Playing basketball?

SARAH: No, being the one that all the boys want to dance with tomorrow night.

BECKY: What are you talking about?

SARAH: You're the one they all want to be with. What's it like being "the one?"

BECKY: I'm not.

SARAH: Syd doesn't want to play basketball. He wants to play lip hockey.

BECKY: "Lip hockey?" Did you make that up?

SARAH: I heard it somewhere.

BECKY: I'm sure some of the boys want to dance with you, too.

SARAH: No, they don't.

BECKY: No, I'm sure they do.

SARAH: I go to an all-girls school. My parents say I'm not even allowed to look at a boy until college.

BECKY: Still—I'm sure boys want to go out with you. Even if you're not allowed.

SARAH: No, you just think that because the girls who are naturally pretty and naturally popular always think that. It's completely different for the rest of us.

BECKY: Okay, but it's not that great.

SARAH: What—being pretty?

BECKY: No, I mean being the one the boys like. It seems really great, but it just makes people mad, you know? And it's not like you can help the fact that boys like you. Because, I mean, it's like they just decide to like the person so that they can have a competition to see who gets her. I mean, it's so stupid, right? It's like, they could care less who the actual girl is. But sometimes I just end up being that girl. I don't know why. You know what I mean?

(Pause.)

SARAH: It's kind of conceited.

BECKY: What is?

SARAH: I knew you were a little stuck-up, but I didn't know you were so totally conceited.

BECKY: I'm not.

SARAH: Sure you're not.

JOSH FALLS ASLEEP EARLY

(The BOYS are looking at JOSH, who fell asleep early. HE is curled up in plaid pajamas, holding the Rubik's cube, of course. The BOYS talk softly so they won't wake up JOSH.)

SYD: No, she beat me because she had a head start.

CRAIG: Yo—Josh is asleep. We have to do "The Pile-On."

RYAN: What's that?

CRAIG: We all pile on Josh, so that he wakes up at the bottom of the pile and almost suffocates, but doesn't.

SYD: Okay, gay boy. Nice.

JT: Yeah, that's really gay.

EVAN: ...says my boyfriend.

SYD: Kiss-kiss!

TYLER: What?

EVAN: Inside joke. Not worth repeating.

CRAIG: No! Oh, I can't believe I didn't think of it sooner! We'll get some warm water, and dunk his hand in...

MIKE: ...to make the kid pee? No, it doesn't work. Just let the kid sleep—he's all worn out from working the cube all day.

RYAN: Yeah, he's getting a little cross-eyed.

SYD: Naw, come on. He should have some real camp fun.

JT: Yeah, he'll love it.

SYD: Maybe we should do a little trucking.

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MIKE: Oh, you got a license all of the sudden?

SYD: When you truck a kid, you wake him up, and shine two flashlights in his face, and yell “TRUCK!”

CRAIG: Awesome! Like waking up in the middle of the highway! You guys should wake me up like that some time!

JT: We should do it.

SYD: JT, get your sheet. Is it white?

JT: Mostly.

SYD: Tyler, you have a white sheet?

TYLER: Sleeping bag.

SYD: Right.

RYAN: I have one. Why?

SYD: Josh is going to the afterlife, so we need...

CRAIG: Ghosts! Outstanding! Incredible! It’s like a little movie in our own little cabin.

(RYAN gets the sheet.)

EVAN: No way. He won’t fall for it.

SYD: Please—this is little Josh we’re talking about.

JT: Exactly.

MIKE: Too bad none of you boys have hobbies. *(HE puts on his headphones and sits by himself.)*

SYD: JT, Tyler—you’re the ghosts.

JT: Got it.

SYD: That means you should put the sheets on.

TYLER: Oh.

RYAN: Music for the afterlife?

SYD: Yeah—everyone else, hide.

EVAN: I want to watch the social experiment unfold.

SYD: Hide and watch, then.

(SYD approaches JOSH, who is still sleeping peacefully. SYD motions 1...2...3, and then turns on the flashlights.)

TRUCK!

JOSH: *(Sits up, confused.)* What?

SYD: TRUCK!

(JOSH screams, and SYD hits his forehead, a little too aggressively, and JOSH falls back on the bed. Some of the BOYS are holding in their laughter. JOSH sits up again, very disoriented. TYLER and JT advance as ghosts, while RYAN plays a haunting melody on the guitar.)

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JT: Welcome to the afterlife, Josh.

TYLER: We are Stanley and Bill. We've been waiting for you.

(JOSH screams. CRAIG jumps out of his hiding place.)

CRAIG: *(Like a film director.)* Cut! That was excellent! Wow, that was so funny. Great take!

JOSH: What the h-e-double-toothpicks?

SYD: *(Laughing at JOSH's strange expression.)* I'm sorry, what did you just say?

EVAN: *(To JOSH.)* It's a joke. They just want you to have some fun at camp.

(EVERYONE looks to JOSH for a reaction. HE is silent and fuming. HE might explode. HE gets his duffel bag and starts to pack his things.)

RYAN: What are you doing, man?

(JOSH keeps packing. HE finds the two flashlights on his bed, and throws them across the room.)

TYLER: Don't be angry, Josh. Come on.

SYD: It was a joke, dude.

(JOSH packs. HE starts looking for the Rubik's cube, which got tossed aside during the prank. MIKE spots the cube, picks it up, and hands it to JOSH.)

JOSH: *(As HE looks MIKE in the eye, sincerely.)* Thank you.

(JOSH picks up his duffel bag and leaves, slamming the cabin door. The BOYS are a little stunned.)

CRAIG: He'll be back, right?

SYD: He's just having a hissy fit. He'll be back.

EVAN: He knows how to find the cabin.

JT: This would be a great time to actually have a counselor.

MIKE: *(To JT.)* Come on, let's go.

JT: What?

MIKE: Get your flashlight. Let's go.

(MIKE and JT exit to find JOSH.)

TYLER: So, are we going to do this prank or not?

CRAIG: I'm in.

IN THE MORNING

(It is the crack of dawn on the morning of Color War, and the GIRLS are already getting pumped. THEY are dressing in red and blue. MARIA is still asleep.)

BECKY: I love Color War!

SARAH: Me, too!

AMBER: You've never even done it before.

SARAH: But I'm sure I'm going to love it!

TAMAR: I wish we didn't have to call it a "war."

MELANIE: Me, too.

SAMANTHA: *(Emerging from the bathroom.)* Okay, how are we out of toilet paper again?

MELANIE: I got some yesterday.

AMBER: Becky's been stuffing her bra again.

BECKY: I have not!

SAMANTHA: Fine, I'll go get more. *(SHE exits.)*

MELANIE: So, who does everyone want to dance with?

(SHE is ignored.)

BECKY: I wish I was on Blue. I look so much better in blue. So, who is everyone dancing with tonight?

AMBER: No, thank you. But I know who Donna wants to dance with.

DONNA: Amber!

MELANIE: Craig, right?

TAMAR: Let me guess! Is it Craig?

DONNA: I'm not saying.

TAMAR: I'm going to find Samantha. See you at breakfast!

MARIA: *(Wakes up. Groggily, puts her feet on the floor. Immediately, SHE's in major pain.)* Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!

DONNA: What's wrong?

MARIA: OW! Dang.

AMBER: And good morning to you, Sleeping Beauty. What's wrong?

MARIA: Ow! I got up last night to get some water, and I tripped over someone's stupid sneakers. *(SHE points to the shoes.)* Whose are those?

BECKY: Ohmygosh, I didn't know I left them out. They're mine. I'm sorry!

MARIA: *(Tries to walk.)* Oh, great. Ow, ow, ow...

SARAH: Is it your foot?

MARIA: My ankle. OW!

BECKY: Oh, no. How are you gonna run?

MARIA: Becky, could you be any more of a pain in the butt? I'm not gonna run, obviously! Do you have to leave your stupid things everywhere? What are those, tennis shoes?

BECKY: Yes. I'm sorry!

MARIA: Do you even play tennis, Becky?

SARAH: Only when there are boys on the courts.

MARIA: Some of us actually play tennis, and run, and actually do things. It would be great if you weren't around to mess it up for us.

SARAH: I can take you to the nurse.

BECKY: Maria, I'm so sorry. Can I just help with something? (*SHE touches her shoulder.*)

MARIA: Do not touch me. And please just stop saying you're sorry about me. Everyone knows you only think about yourself.

(*MARIA hobbles out, supported by SARAH. BECKY cries into her hands and AMBER goes to comfort her.*)

AMBER: I'm sure it was an accident.

BECKY: Why is she being so mean to me?

AMBER: You have to just shake it off. No big deal.

BECKY: I feel awful. Why does she have to be so mean?

THE PRANK

(*The BOYS are preparing for Color War in the cabin.*)

ALL BOYS: COLOR WAR!!!

(*THEY chest bump and hi-five. Some of them do push-ups.*)

SYD: (*Talking to CRAIG.*) Okay, so any lifting challenges should go to me, and any speed challenges should go to you.

(*SAMANTHA and TAMAR go storming into the boys' cabin, where THEY find the guys getting ready for Color War. ALL the GUYS are present except JOSH and MIKE.*)

SAMANTHA: What were you thinking?

TYLER: What? It was funny.

CRAIG: Best prank ever!

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TAMAR: No, it wasn't. It wasn't even funny.

SAMANTHA: Seriously? Taking the toilet paper out of the director cabin? How stupid are you?

CRAIG: Okay—that was Tyler's idea. I admit that maybe it was crossing the line a little bit. But, come on, they're freaking out for practically no reason.

SAMANTHA: Every single roll of toilet paper in camp dumped in the lake? Oh, except the rolls in your own cabin. Great work, Einsteins! Gee, I wonder how they figured out who did it?

TYLER: Yeah, we also left a note saying "Happy Prank! Love, cabin 9g and 9b."

TAMAR: But 9g wasn't even involved at all!

TYLER: You said we could do it. It's 9th grade prank! Don't you want to take credit for one of the greatest pranks of all time?

CRAIG: It's the best prank ever! Tyler, my man, you are a genius!

SAMANTHA: Oh yeah? Well, some of us have to pee! (*SHE marches into the bathroom and grabs their toilet paper.*) This belongs to the girls.

SYD: Amber helped us, you know.

SAMANTHA: Then Amber can sleep in your bunk from now on.

(*SHE storms out with the toilet paper.*)

TAMAR: Seriously, you guys. The lake has its own ecosystem, and you probably totally screwed it up. Plus, it's just gross.

CRAIG: Okay, but it looked so awesome. Just picture all those rolls gently bobbing around in the water... the moon shining... they were like little round boats drifting away...

TAMAR: If it wasn't the last night of camp, they would send you home early.

SYD: Us home early. You girls all agreed to a prank, as long as it wouldn't hurt anyone.

TAMAR: It hurt the fish! By anyone, we meant the wildlife, too! Plus, you wasted a ton of paper. That's a bunch of trees mercilessly murdered.

EVAN: I'm sure they'll take it out of the lake.

(*BECKY bursts into the cabin.*)

BECKY: Where is everyone?

TAMAR: Why? What's wrong?

BECKY: They're not letting us go to Color War or the dance.

SYD: No Color War?

TAMAR: No dance?

(ALL scream.)

MIKE FINDS JOSH

(JOSH is sleeping in the woods, using his duffel bag as a pillow.)

MIKE: Hey. Hey Josh. Wake up.

JOSH: What time is it?

MIKE: About 6:30. Have you been out here the whole time?

JOSH: Were you trying to find me?

MIKE: No. Just walking.

JOSH: Because I'm almost an Eagle Scout. It's not like I need you to come find me.

MIKE: About the guys... I've been there, too.

JOSH: No, you haven't.

MIKE: The guys in my neighborhood? They would think that prank was tame.

JOSH: Okay, you're much tougher than me. I get it.

MIKE: Naw—not at all. I think they don't know what it's like to be on the other end of it.

JOSH: You were looking for me.

MIKE: No—I just needed a walk.

JOSH: At 6:30 AM?

MIKE: You should come back. Color War starts this morning.

JOSH: You stand a better chance without me.

MIKE: We need you. If there's a cube competition, we know that you're all over it.

JOSH: Very funny. I can't even finish it.

MIKE: Blue needs you, man. If we don't have your brains... just come back, okay?

JOSH: Serious?

MIKE: On the bright side, Melanie says she's never working with you again.

JOSH: Are you making fun of me? I can't tell—it's like you're nice and mean at the same time.

MIKE: It's called joking around. It's what friends do. Come on.

(MIKE picks up JOSH's duffel bag and carries it for him as THEY walk off.)

AFTER THE PRANK

(BECKY is reading a letter to the other GIRLS in the girls' cabin.)

BECKY: “Due to the irresponsible and costly actions of your children, each family will be charged a \$25 toilet paper replacement fee, and asked not to return to camp.”

AMBER: Twenty-five dollars? For toilet paper?

TAMAR: Stupid boys.

SARAH: Plus Amber.

AMBER: I don't care. It was worth it.

SAMANTHA: By the way, I took their toilet paper.

BECKY: *(Running to the bathroom.)* Oh, thank gawd.

SARAH: *(Calling after her.)* Please don't take the Lord's name in vain over toilet paper.

SAMANTHA: Amber, maybe you don't care about it, but some of us are planning to be C.I.T.s next year, and this could totally mess it up. Right, Donna?

DONNA: Well...

AMBER: Actually, it's not a big deal. Right, Donna?

DONNA: Well... um... right. You're both right. It's not really a big deal—I think it's kind of funny, actually. But it is a big deal if you want to be a counselor.

AMBER: But you're not, right? Because I thought you were coming to New York next summer.

DONNA: I was... I might... I don't know! I might do either one.

MARIA: We did tell them it would be okay. We let them do it.

TAMAR: We didn't know they were going to pollute the lake.

(MELANIE enters the cabin. SHE is dressed provocatively, perhaps in a miniskirt. SHE looks very un-Melanie. ALL the GIRLS stop their conversation to stare at her.)

AMBER: *(Pause.)* Are we trying out a new look, Mel?

MELANIE: Shut up.

BECKY: No, it looks great. You just look really different.

AMBER: And by different, she means skanky.

MELANIE: Leave it. I'm going across the lake.

TAMAR: To the all-boys' camp? I've done it before.

MARIA: No, you haven't.

TAMAR: I have! It's fun.

SARAH: Won't they kick you out of camp if they find out?

BECKY: Yeah, you probably shouldn't.

MELANIE: It's so funny when you pretend you care.

(*Outside of the BOYS' cabin.*)

TYLER: I'm glad the dance was called off. I don't really know how to dance.

RYAN: It's pretty much just holding the girl's waist and swaying.

TYLER: What about the music?

RYAN: It's better if you can sway to the beat of the music, but it's not completely necessary.

TYLER: What about fast songs?

RYAN: I don't recommend those for you.

CLEANING UP

(*EVERYONE except TAMAR is cleaning up after Color War. The field is covered in red and blue streamers, signs, plastic cups. TYLER is writing a letter. EVERYONE else is cleaning up and generally feeling miserable.*)

CRAIG: (*Holding up some red streamers, with irony.*) Red rules! Red rules! Red rules!

RYAN: It looks like they managed to have some fun at Color War while we were dragging soggy toilet paper out of the lake.

SYD: Just be quiet and do your job.

DONNA: Come on, guys. We're almost done with the entire field.

AMBER: Our counselors are so great at supervising us, aren't they? They should get a raise.

EVAN: Where are they, anyway?

AMBER: (*Pointing to the counselors, who are making out again.*) Look.

No, don't look. He's like a vacuum cleaner—if they kiss much longer, her face is going to come right off.

EVAN: Ugh. Heinous!

AMBER: Gross! It's like watching a cow with a salt lick.

TYLER: "Dear Maintenance..." How do you spell "maintenance?"

SAMANTHA: M-A-I-N-T-E-N-A-N-C-E.

TYLER: Slower.

SAMANTHA: Here—I'll write it.

SARAH: No! Tyler's the one who got us into this. He should have to write it.

TYLER: I'm dyslexic, you know.

SARAH: Good! I hope it's hard for you! I hope it's really, really hard for you! I hope you suffer!

AMBER: Geez, Sarah. We all thought prank was a good idea.

TYLER: Spell it again?

SAMANTHA: M-A-I...

JT: Who's writing the one to the directors?

SAMANTHA: ...N-T-E-N...

SYD: Are you volunteering?

JT: No.

SAMANTHA: ...A-N-C-E.

SYD: Have your little boyfriend write it. He's smart. Hey, Evan!

JT: He's not my boyfriend.

SYD: Evan! Loverboy has a task for you!

(JT punches SYD in the face.)

JT: Shut up! Shut up! You never shut up!

SYD: What the...?

JT: You never shut up about my dad!

JOSH: Who said anything about his dad?

JT: You can't talk like that because my dad is gay, alright?

SYD: *(Overlapping.)* Okay, whatever.

JT: *(Continuous.)* And I'm done with being embarrassed about it. That's who he is and it's not going to change and you can't say things like that. And there used to be someone he loved--it was a man, okay? And it's not a big deal that it was a guy, but he died, and that was a big deal, and it wasn't from AIDS, even though that's what everyone always thinks. And my dad really loved that person so who cares?

SYD: I didn't mean anything about your dad. I didn't even know about your dad.

JT: *(Overlapping.)* Yes, you did. And I'm not gay, and even if I was, it would be fine, and it's not your job to make a comment on it. Apologize.

(Nothing happens. SYD is shell-shocked.)

Apologize!

SYD: I'm sorry! I didn't mean anything about your dad.

JT: Yes, you did. Indirectly. Apologize to Evan.

SYD: Why?

EVAN: I could care less.

JT: Do it!

SYD: Sorry, Evan. For whatever I did.

MARIA: Alright. Everyone just cool off. Take a lap.

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DONNA: How many hours have we been cleaning camp?

EVAN: Seven and a half hours. No, wait. Eight and a half.

SAMANTHA: I hate camp.

AMBER: Yeah, well, like it or lump it. They're not letting us go to sleep until it's clean.

TYLER: Okay, I have "Dear Maintenance Staff, we are..."

MIKE: Try "sorry."

CRAIG: I'm not sorry. I don't care what they do to us. These are the times that camp memories make, my friends.

TYLER: "We are sorry... that..."

(JOSH is working furiously on the cube.)

JT: Josh, maybe you could actually help us here?

(TAMAR bursts in, soaking wet, perhaps covered in weeds from the lake.)

TAMAR: I have been tied to a tree by the lake for the past nine hours! I have rope burns on my wrists! And when I finally got loose, I fell in the lake! It was freezing! Was anyone worried about me? Did anyone come to check on me? Did anyone think of bringing me lunch?

MELANIE: Oh my gosh, who tied you to a tree?

TAMAR: I did! I tied myself to a tree!

EVAN: Fun activity.

TAMAR: Maybe you don't care about the fish, choking on toilet paper while just trying to go about their daily lives.

MELANIE: I care.

TAMAR: No, you don't. Nobody cares! You're all here, having a party, because no one even cares about the poor fish! But I had to make a statement. I stayed there until every last roll was removed!

TYLER: I helped. That ended hours ago.

TAMAR: YOU! You did this!

TYLER: *(Holding up the letter.)* Okay—I'm apologizing!

TAMAR: *(Grabbing the letter and tearing it up.)* Apologize to the fish!

TYLER: Hey!

AMBER: Great, Tamar. You're a big help.

(TYLER grabs another piece of paper.)

SAMANTHA: M-A-I-N...

SYD: Here we go again.

RYAN: Would this be a good time for a song?

TAMAR & AMBER: No!

SYD: Melanie, what are you wearing?

MELANIE: No one even talks to me all week, and suddenly everyone cares what I'm wearing?

MARIA: Get used to it, girl. This camp is full of shallow people. (*SHE shoots a look at BECKY.*)

BECKY: Thanks a lot.

MARIA: Watch out—their tennis shoes bite.

BECKY: Maria, get off it. It was an accident. I said I was sorry.

MELANIE: No one even cared that I was going to go to the boys' camp.

CRAIG: (*Approaches MELANIE.*) Do you need a hug?

MELANIE: No!

CRAIG: Yes, you do.

(*HE hugs her, making ridiculous “mmmmm” sounds. MELANIE laughs.*)

TYLER: I'm trying to write, here.

RYAN: Would you please let someone else write the letter?

TYLER: You think you could do a better job?

RYAN: I think anyone could do a better job.

CRAIG: He has a disability. Leave him alone.

SAMANTHA: If I don't get to be a C.I.T. because of Tyler Lamason's stupid prank, I'm gonna lose it.

TYLER: That's me. Tyler Lamason, summer's least valuable player.

CRAIG: No, man. You're my MVP. Really—best prank ever.

DONNA: Yeah, it's completely unfair.

AMBER: You don't even want to be a C.I.T. next year.

DONNA: I might. I don't know yet! I'm sick of you two pressuring me to do a certain thing next summer. I don't even know yet about next summer!

RYAN: Yeah, stop pressuring her already.

EVAN: That's peer pressure, you know. You two are her peers.

(*BECKY laughs, a little too enthusiastically, and OTHERS look at her.*)

BECKY: What? It's funny.

JT: Hear that? The busses just pulled off.

SARAH: What busses?

CRAIG: The rest of camp is going out for ice cream without us!

SARAH: They get ice cream? I want ice cream!

TYLER: I'm so hungry.

TAMAR: YOU! Don't! Get to speak!

EVAN: Tamar, come off it. It's great that you had your little Greenwar and staged your little protest by the lake. But don't act all superior when you weren't even here helping the rest of us.

TAMAR: At least I can think about something bigger than myself. At least I care about something.

MARIA: Becky cares about something bigger than herself. She cares about her clothes.

SARAH: She cares about which boys like her.

BECKY: Just stop it!

EVAN: Leave her alone.

MARIA: (*Hobbles over to EVAN.*) Who's gonna make me?

SYD: Careful, man. She'll kick your butt, sprained ankle or not.

EVAN: You're jealous of her.

MARIA: Oh, right. I'm sure.

EVAN: You are—it's so obvious.

MARIA: UGH!

(*SHE throws garbage at EVAN, awkwardly. EVAN retaliates. Then, BECKY throws garbage at MARIA.*)

BECKY: Jealous, jealous, jealous!

AMBER: Now we're talking! (*Throws garbage.*)

CRAIG: COLOR WAR!!!

(*EVERYONE gets into the throwing, except JOSH and MIKE. Lots of noise. SYD, CRAIG, and AMBER are enjoying themselves. EVERYONE else is frustrated and angry.*)

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