

Gay Shmay

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EXT. CAMP SOCCER FIELD - EVENING

Whistle's BLOW through a giant open field surrounded by trees. At either end is a goal net. Scattered about are GROUPS OF CAMPERS in brightly colored jerseys.

ISABELL (18), a stern camp counselor in a blue jersey, stands with her clipboard ready. She stands in front of a group of TEEN GIRLS in matching jerseys.

ISABELL

Alright, BLUE WHALES! How many of you have done the human knot before?

A singular hand rockets into the sky. It belongs to Jess (14), whose wide grin matches her hyper energy.

JESS

Everyone stands in a circle, reaches across to grab the hands of two different people, and then the group works together to untangle without letting go.

ISABELL

Right. Okay, group, circle up.

The girls shuffle into a loose circle. Jess scans the group. Across from her hand is ALEX (14) hair covering a portion of her face.

Jess takes her hand and a person's off to the left.

ISABELL (CONT'D)

Remember to communicate. And try to avoid elbows to the face. Go!

The group twists and contorts. Jess, spinning ducks under a reaching arm, when she feels her elbow brush against someone's side.

ALEX

Ow.

Jess looks to see Alex, her face lit by the sun. Jess blushes as Alex moves away.

JESS

Sorry about that.

The exercise continues. There's a tangle of limbs and laughter. They finally untangle, sweaty and triumphant. High-fives and cheers **erupt**.

Jess looks toward Alex, who lets out a sweet, **melodic** laugh, hair glowing under the setting sun. Jess shakes her head.

JESS (CONT'D)  
(to herself)  
Totally normal.

ISABELL  
Way to go, Blue Wales. Let's head  
back to the cabin.

They march across the field.

INT. CABIN- EVENING

Sunlight filters through slatted wooden windows, dust motes floating in the warm air. Fans hum lazily. Bunks line one wall, and in the center are the campers' bags.

ISABELL  
Alright, I suggest you use this  
time to start unpacking. The  
bedding assignment is right over  
here, and next to it is a sign-up  
list for tomorrow's activities.

Jess walks over to the table and pursues the list. She's bunked with Alex.

Unzipping her suitcase, she pulls out a blanket and places it on the top bunk. Alex walks up behind her.

JESS  
I hope you don't mind; I prefer the  
top, as it gives me a wide eye  
view. Did you go to Jefferson  
Middle School?

ALEX  
I did. And I don't mind, I've never  
been to camp before. My parents  
thought it would help me open up  
before starting high school.

JESS  
Gotcha. Well, this is my first time  
here, but I've been to others.  
There's the standard fair. Arts and  
crafts, archery, and swimming.

ALEX  
I'll probably choose swimming then.  
Thanks.

JESS  
 No prob. Still need to choose mine,  
 actually.

Jess excitedly hurries over to the activity list clipboard.  
 She circles whittling.

INT. WHITTILING STATION - DAY

Jess sits at a table with a small knife and a bar of soap in  
 the shape of a heart. The majority of the other tables are  
 empty, with only a couple of male campers present whom are  
 clumsily hacking away.

Jess looks into the distant, eyes unfocused. Her hands trace  
 the name she's carved. It reads: Alex.

A shadow falls across the table.

INSTRUCTOR  
 Whoa. You made that? It looks  
 great.

Jess looks up. It's JORDAN (18), with his shaggy hair, khaki  
 shorts, and self-confidence that radiates from his sun-kissed  
 skin. He's the human embodiment of a golden retriever.

JESS  
 Thanks.

He drops onto the chair across from her, intensely looking at  
 her.

JORDAN  
 Ah, got your eye on someone?

Jess looks up, sort of nervous.

JESS  
 Huh?

JORDAN  
 (gesturing)  
 Him... Alex.

JESS.  
 Oh, it's-

JORDAN  
 Oh! Is it a camper? Maybe I know  
 him.

JESS  
(looking away)  
No. You wouldn't know them.

JORDAN  
Ah. In that case, perhaps a bar of soap would be better than something carved. God knows some of the guys here could use it... Give him a compliment. It works every time.

JESS  
Really? Does it work on anyone?

JORDAN  
Totally. My girlfriend did that to me. We're going to college together in the fall.

JESS  
What kind of compliment?

JORDAN  
Anything. Maybe compliment him on a skill. Tell him how manly he is. Guys, eat that stuff up.

Jordan stands.

JESS  
I'll keep that in mind.

JORDAN  
(oblivious)  
No problem.

He walks off. Jess chuckles to herself.

INT. CABIN - MORNING

Jess finishes tying her shoes and sits on her bed, watching all the other girls scramble in and out of the open bathroom, getting ready for the day.

ISABELL  
Alright girls! I want everyone outside ready to go in seven minutes.

Alex stands in front of the sinks, straightening her long black hair. Jess is enamored, unable to look away.

When Alex finishes and walks to the bunk, she reaches underneath to get something from her bag. They make eye contact, Jess blushes.

JESS

Alex, your hair.. It's really great and shiny.

Completely oblivious to Jess's awkwardness, Alex smiles brightly at her.

ALEX

Oh! Thank you so much.

TWEET! Isabella blows her whistle.

ISABELL

Time's up girls! Let's get to first rotation.

INT. WHITTILING STATION - DAY

Jess sits at one of the tables. Multiple half-done projects scatter the table. She looks semi-defeated as she struggles to whittle this next chunk of soap.

JORDAN

How's it going over here, bro?

He sits down at her table, still looking over her handiwork. He reads the frustration on her face.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Alex givin' you the run-around huh? Don't let it get to you, boys are stupid. I don't know how my girlfriend put up with me.

JESS

How did you know if she was interested in you?

JORDAN

We were both at a party and I thought she had really pretty makeup on, and so I asked her out.

Jordan stares off, nostalgic. Jess's finger's touch her lips, self-conscious.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Inside the cabin,

Jess holds a pink lipstick, unsure but determined. POP. She breaks the seal, revealing the unused bright pink interior. Her eyes compare her one lipstick to the other girls' makeup bags that litter the countertop.

EXT. NEXT TO CABIN ENTRANCE - MORNING

All the girls are lined up outside the cabin - except Jess.

ISABELL

What is takin' that girl so long?

Isabell takes a step, ready to charge in. Alex speaks up to de-escalate.

ALEX

Wait, I can go grab her!

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex comes into the bathroom. She halts when she sees Jess.

Jess has tears welling in her eyes. Lipstick is applied messily.

Alex rushes to help her and Jess freezes awkwardly. Without hesitation, Alex takes out the makeup wipes, putting one gently to Jess's face.

ALEX

I didn't know you wore makeup.

JESS

Yeah, this is my first time.

Alex's face twists slightly, slightly confused but amused at Jess's words. Alex chuckles.

ALEX

Then, what made you put all this on? I would've been happy to help you out or lend you some.

Jess blubbers as the tears break out from her eyes, it all comes spilling out at once.

JESS

I'm so sorry, this *is* yours. I just swiped it, I needed makeup, I'm not girlie enough.

ALEX

Girlie enough? For what?

JESS

For you.

ALEX

Oh... Oh!

Alex smiles at her in realization. They clasp hands and Jess leads the way. A new confidence behind her step.

EXT. WHITTLING STATION PATIO - LATER THAT DAY

Jordan walks from table to table, checking in on the campers' work. His face lights up when he sees that Jess has brought another girl.

JORDAN

Welcome to whittling! Glad to see Jess brought a friend...

His sentence comes to an abrupt and awkward halt when he realizes the nature of their relationship, immediately regretting his word choice.

Alex sits at the table next to Jess, close enough that their knees touch. She rests her face in her hands as Jess carves at the heart she'd worked on previously, now engraving it with a "J + A".

JESS

Hey thanks, your advice worked.

He flushes with brief embarrassment.

JORDAN

Always glad to help!

He shoots out of his seat and walks to the next table, eager to escape the situation.