

Chapter 7

It was lights out on another horrible day. Everybody accounted for in their beds-there was me, the five Hooligans and Counselor Quentin. I wasn't sure how I was going to make it through another night. I had no idea of where the counselor was disappearing to at night. I didn't know why these five strange boys hated me so much. I missed my own bed, I missed my dog, missed my comic books and my little black and white T.V. I sat there under the covers and almost convinced myself that if I think hard enough that I could magically transport out of church camp and to some other place far away. I tried and tried but no amount of wishing and hoping could get me out of that cabin.

I opened my eyes as wide as I could and vowed to not go to sleep-to stay on high guard throughout the night and not get taken by surprise. If I had to die, I was going to die fighting them. I turned to my side and noticed that everyone else seemed to be fast and deeply asleep. And it could have been an hour, it could have been two (time moves so terribly slow in the darkness of night), but I watched Counselor Quentin slowly sit up in his cot then very quietly get up. He put on his shoes and crept around the room, stopping to look at each of us for a few moments as if checking to see if WE were asleep. He walked around the room in a counterclockwise circle, he came to my corner of the cabin. I closed my eyes, but not too tightly, relaxed my body and pretended to be asleep.

Then he walked a few more steps away from me and stopped. Then I heard the doorknob turn. I heard the rusty hinges squeak. I opened my eyes and peered at him. He took one more look over his shoulder at the Hooligans and me. He walked through the door and was gone into the night.

Quickly, I thought, what to do...what to do. I heard his steps disappearing down the sidewalk. A couple of The Hooligans were starting to stir. I jumped up, got my jeans and tennis shoes on, put my glasses on the nose and blitzed out the door with as much stealth as I could muster and followed the counselor.

The night was clear. There was a full moon out. I followed him down the sidewalk onto the dirt path. I followed him through the woods to The Lake, always staying at a distance whereby I could see him, but he could not see me.

I could hear laughing and other voices down at The Lake. I took a safe position behind some Palmettos and watched. Our counselor had met up with The Others. I counted. There were seventeen of them in all. They were all gathered beneath The Gazebo which was built at the end of the pier overlooking The Lake. They were passing around a bottle. There were beer cans all over the floor of The Gazebo. They began to smoke cigars and cigarettes and play cards. Soon, some of them were throwing off their clothes and skinny dipping in The Lake. I had never seen such goofiness and heard such laughing in my whole life.

Again, I don't know how long this all went on, but I watched them throughout the night as my eyes stayed glued on all these scenes before my eyes. I constantly fought back the urge to sleep. Finally, I don't know what time it was, their party began to disperse and each of them started to stagger back to their respective parts of The Camp.

Counselor Quentin started hobbling toward me. "Oh man, on man, "I thought to myself. "I better get out of here and back to the cabin before he does, or I will be in major trouble."

I bolted through the woods parallel to the dirt path, well ahead of him. I ran across the playground onto the sidewalk and to the door of our cabin. Carefully, I peeked into the room and looked at The Hooligans. Thank goodness they were still fast asleep. I tippy toed into the room, took off my jeans, shoes and glasses then slipped into bed under the covers. I intensely watched the door. Minutes later, I saw Quentin peek in just I had and slipped into bed himself.

The sun wasn't up yet. It probably wasn't long until sunrise. Sleep and darkness washed over my mind after my long adventured through the woods that night.