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CAMP MURDER

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written by

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Synopsis

A group of parents and their children have just ventured into the wilderness on an exciding camping adventure. Each character is at different levels of preparedness and when the group gets stuck on the top of the mountain those differences start to show. The trip takes an even worse turn as several members end up dying. What at first could be blown off as a horrible accident quickly reveals that there is a murderer amongst them. With no help in sight the group must figure out who the murderer is, before it’s too late.

Cast of Characters

DOUG LEWIS	40-year-old man who is a scouting enthusiast
LUIS LEWIS	14-year-old son of Doug, also a scouter
CAITLYN DYER	14-year-old girl
KELLY DYER	14-year-old twin sister of Caitlyn
EMILY DYER	40-year-old mother of Caitlyn and Kelly
BILLY JOE	14-year-old back woods boy
MARY JOE	Mother of Billy Joe
KAYLA HALL	14-year-old vegetarian naturalist
MELISSA HALL	40-year-old mother of Kayla, also a vegetarian naturalist
SUSAN	14-year-old drama queen
DEBRA	40-year-old mother of Susan, also a drama queen
PATTY MITCHELL	14-year-old spoiled rich brat
JASON MITCHELL	40-year-old father of Patty
RANGER RICK	40-year-old forest ranger

ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: High on a mountaintop. There is a beautiful view of a valley below. On the stage there are a few trees and some scattered logs and larger rocks. Birds are singing in the background.

At Rise: DOUG LEWIS enters SL. He is dressed in a boy-scout masters'outfit. He has a backpack on, full of camping supplies.

DOUG LEWIS

(breathing deep)

Ah, that wasn't too bad.

(calling off SL)

Hurry up Luis.

(LUIS LEWIS enters SL. He is also dressed in a boy-scout outfit. He has a backpack on.)

LUIS LEWIS

Right here dad.

DOUG LEWIS

Look at that view son, nothing greater. You know son, it's times like these where you have to sit back and contemplate life, think about all that life has given us. Up here in the mountains you can really hear nature, can't ya.

LUIS LEWIS

Sure thing dad.

DOUG LEWIS

Let's just listen, listen to nature…

CAITLYN DYER *(offstage)*

Ahhhhhh.

LUIS LEWIS

Nature's really loud.

(CAITLYN DYER enters SL in a panic and hides behind DOUG. She is dressed in jeans and a light jacket. She has a camping backpack on.)

CAITLYN DYER

Get him away from me.

DOUG LEWIS

What's wrong?

CAITLYN DYER

He's going to get me.

(BILLY JOE enters SL. He is dressed in overalls and a worn-out baseball cap. He has a small bed roll tied onto a rope over his shoulder. He carries a snake. LUIS starts to thumb through a small book.)

BILLY JOE

What's the matter Caitlyn, it's only a snake.

CAITLYN DYER

Get it away from me.

BILLY JOE

Stop it you're scaring him.

DOUG LEWIS

Billy Joe, I think you should put the snake down.

BILLY JOE

What fer?

DOUG LEWIS

Obviously Caitlyn is very scared by it.

BILLY JOE

It’s just ‘cause she don’t know him yet.

DOUG LEWIS

Son what are you doing?

LUIS LEWIS

Seeing what the scout handbook says about snakes.

DOUG LEWIS

Yes, the Scout handbook, the one thing that can bring light to guide us.

LUIS LEWIS

Ah here it is. When encountering a snake slowly back away from the animal, never attempt to touch or pick it up.

DOUG LEWIS

We’re a little too late for that.

BILLY JOE

Let me see that book?

(BILLY JOE approaches DOUG and LUIS, they both back away from him. LUIS holds out the book as far away from himself as possible. BILLY JOE looks at the book and turns the pages with the hand that the snake is in. LUIS is very scared.)

BILLY JOE

This book ain't worth nothing.

(LUIS screams and drops the book.)

LUIS LEWIS

It bit me, it bit me, suck out the poison, suck out the poison!!!

DOUG LEWIS

Hold still.

(DOUG wrestles LUIS to the ground and dramatically sucks out the poison from his hand and spits. CAITLYN faints from the excitement.)

BILLY JOE

Excuse me… excuse me. Ya didn't get bit.

DOUG LEWIS

Listen Billy Joe, just because you're not afraid of these things and probably eat them for diner, doesn't mean my son doesn't need help.

BILLY JOE

I may not know much, but I do know the part with the mouth is usually the head, not the tail.

(LUIS stops thrashing around and sits up.)

LUIS LEWIS

What?

BILLY JOE

This end touched you; the mouth is on the other end. Not that it matters much, cause this snake ain't poisonous.

DOUG LEWIS

The tail hit you?

LUIS LEWIS

I felt something, I just assumed it was the fangs.

DOUG LEWIS

Well, let that be a lesson in always being prepared. You see Caitlyn there's nothing to be afraid of.

(He sees CAITLYN on the ground. LUIS picks up the handbook and starts thumbing through it.)

DOUG LEWIS

Caitlyn… Caitlyn are you okay?

CAITLYN DYER

I… I…

BILLY JOE

(approaching with the snake)

Sure she's okay.

CAITLYN DYER

Ahhhhh.

(She faints.)

DOUG LEWIS

Billy Joe, get that thing out of here.

BILLY JOE

Okay, okay I know when I'm not wanted.

(BILLY JOE exits SR.)

DOUG LEWIS

What does it say?

LUIS LEWIS

To avoid fainting drink plenty of fluids and rest often.

DOUG LEWIS

She already fainted, what does it say to do after you faint?

(LUIS turns a few more pages.)

LUIS LEWIS

Place cold compresses on forehead and elevate feet.

(DOUG takes out his canteen and takes off the handkerchief around his neck. He wets the handkerchief and puts it on CAITLYN's head. During this LUIS has taken off his backpack and places it under CAITLYN's legs. CAITLYN lies down with her feet to the audience. DOUG and LUIS stand proudly next to CAITLYN.)

DOUG LEWIS

Well son, once again we've saved the day.

(EMILY DYER and KELLY DYER enter SL. EMILY is CAITLYN's mom. She is dressed in jeans and a light jacket. She has on a backpack. KELLY is CAITLYN's twin sister. They don't look anything alike. KELLY is dressed similar to EMILY.)

EMILY DYER

(running over to CAITLYN)

What happened?

DOUG LEWIS

Just a little scare, nothing to worry about.

KELLY DYER

You okay, Kate?

CAITLYN DYER

(motioning with her hands only)

I'll be fine… just need to rest a bit.

KELLY DYER

Do you need anything sis?

CAITLYN DYER

No… you know I can see up your nose.

(MARY JOE enters SL. She is BILLY JOE's mom. She is dressed in raggedy jeans and wears an old straw hat.)

MARY JOE

Where'd my son go?

DOUG LEWIS

(pointing SR)

He went over there.

MARY JOE

Did Billy have something to do with this?

DOUG LEWIS

He had a snake.

CAITLYN DYER

(using her hands)

It was huge.

MARY JOE

That boy gist can't help but mess with every animal he sees. Billy Joe… Billy Joe, I'm gonna tan that hide of yours.

(exits SR)

DOUG LEWIS

I think this might be a good place to set up camp, why don't we start setting up the tents.

KELLY DYER

Where's everybody else?

DOUG LEWIS

I'm sure they're coming.

(DOUG and LUIS go upstage and start unpacking. KELLY takes out a granola bar and starts to eat. EMILY takes the other backpacks off stage right.)

CAITLYN DYER

Hey sis, how about a piece?

(KELLY takes off a small piece and just drops it into CAITLYN's mouth. MELISSA HALL and KAYLA HALL enter SL. MELISSA is KAYLA's mother. They are dressed in very bright flamboyant, almost hippie clothes. They both have on small backpacks and are using walking sticks.)

MELISSA HALL

(stopping suddenly)

Right here. Come child stand here.

(KAYLA stands next to MELISSA.)

MELISSA HALL

Do you feel it, all the energy of the mountain is centered right here.

KAYLA HALL

That's amazing mother. I feel at one with the nature that is our mother.

MELISSA HALL

This is a special moment that must be remembered child, we are one.

KELLY DYER *(sarcastically)*

Haven't you been one about every ten steps during this hike.

MELISSA HALL

We cannot choose where the energy is, only bask in its powers.

KELLY DYER

I think your "energy" is your stomach's reaction to that soytofu eggplant sandwich you had for lunch.

KAYLA HALL

Better than eating that slaughterhouse you call a sandwich. How many animals had to die… how many had to sacrifice their life, so that you could feast on their flesh.

KELLY DYER

I'm not sure what was in the sausage, but… around five.

(KAYLA jumps at KELLY. MELISSA holds her back.)

MELISSA HALL

Control your energy… release the negative energy.

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ACT II

Scene 1

Setting: The tents are all set up. There is a pile of wood sitting next to an unlit campfire. It is dusk now.

At Rise: Everyone is sitting around except for LUIS, DOUG, PATTY, SUSAN, and KAYLA. BILLY JOE has his snake with him. RANGER RICK is trying to get a fire started rubbing two sticks together. Everyone has blankets and jackets on.

RANGER RICK

You see long before matches the aboriginal people had to create fire with friction. Rubbing two sticks together was one of these ways.

EMILY DYER

Do you need any help.

RANGER RICK

No need ma'am. A Ranger is always prepared.

KELLY DYER

Wouldn't having some matches mean that you were prepared.

RANGER RICK

Why carry around extra matches when there's plenty of good sticks around, see little girl, that's called smart thinking.

KELLY DYER

It's also called idiocy.

(SUSAN and KAYLA enter SL with some sticks and logs for firewood.)

SUSAN

What's going on, why isn't there a fire?

KELLY DYER

Ranger Moron doesn't have any matches.

EMILY DYER

Kelly, stop it.

KELLY DYER

What?

MELISSA HALL

It's the fire spirit, punishing us for the death of Mr. Mitchell.

KAYLA HALL

But now he is part of the universe.

MELISSA HALL

Yes, my child, he is with them now… that's probably why they're punishing us.

EMILY DYER

Where's Patty?

MARY JOE

Little girl said she wanted to be alone with daddy's wallet for a while.

EMILY DYER

That's not very nice.

MARY JOE

What? That's what she said. She took out his wallet and walked over there to their tent. Said that was the part about him she knew best.

EMILY DYER

How tragic.

DEBRA

We're not talking Sophocles's Orestia Trilogy, this is hardly tragic, he got what he deserved.

KAYLA HALL

What?

DEBRA

He lived by money, and he died by money.

CAITLYN DYER

He was trying to make a phone call.

DEBRA

He ignored the nature around him, he couldn't see past the end of his snobby little nose. Nature called out to him and all they got in reply was a busy signal, so nature upped the signal.

EMILY DYER

What?

DEBRA

And scene. I was attempting to be an overactive tree huggernaturalist, did it work.

SUSAN

Bravo, bravo… I truly felt your pain and you expressed so vividly both your concern and anguish.

KELLY DYER

Weird.

(DOUG enters SR with matches in hand.)

DOUG LEWIS

See, I knew where they were, just took a little extra searching.

BILLY JOE

I thought a good scout was always prepared.

DOUG LEWIS

I was Billy Joe, I made a map of all my supplies in my backpack… but then I lost the map.

(hands the matches to RANGER)

DEBRA

Perhaps you're not a true scout after all.

DOUG LEWIS

I'm a scout, and that's all I am.

(RANGER strikes a match and the fire starts.)

MELISSA HALL

Oh fire spirits we thank you for your presence.

DOUG LEWIS

It's too late to get any real dinner started, how about some hot dogs.

KAYLA HALL

I have some tofu sticks.

CAITLYN DYER

I'd like a hot dog.

DOUG LEWIS

Alright, I'll go get some, where's Luis.

KELLY DYER

Most likely planning his next murder.

EMILY DYER

Kelly.

SUSAN

(pointing SL)

He was walking over there somewhere.

(DOUG exits SL.)

RANGER RICK

I think I'm going to go check around, make sure everything's on the up and up. You ladies stay close to the fire.

(exit SR)

(PATTY enters SL. She carries a wallet in her hands.)

EMILY DYER

Patty come here, are you all right.

PATTY MITCHELL

Yes, I'll be fine. You just never know what's going to happen. I don't know what I'm going to do.

MELISSA HALL

You'll get through this child; he's gone on to a better place.

PATTY MITCHELL

No I mean I don't know who will buy me things now, I need someone to buy me things.

EMILY DYER

I'm sure someone will be able to buy you things.

PATTY MITCHELL

Do you really think so.

EMILY DYER

Of course dear.

(DOUG enters SL with hot dogs, several long sticks and LUIS.)

DOUG LEWIS

Dinner is served.

KELLY DYER

So Luis, murder anyone lately, or do you do your killing after dinner?

EMILY DYER

Kelly.

LUIS LEWIS

Shut up Kelly.

KELLY DYER

What are you going to do? Oh, that's right, murder me.

DOUG LEWIS

Listen it's been a very long day, I think we all need to just relax, eat some food, then get to bed; everything will be better tomorrow.

BILLY JOE

Joe- Darn it.

DOUG LEWIS

What now?

BILLY JOE

Nothing, gist my snake got away again.

(Girls scream.)

BILLY JOE

You're gonna scare him away.

(Girls stop, look at each other and scream again even louder.)

DOUG LEWIS

Calm down. The snake's not going to hurt anyone, let's eat up.

KAYLA HALL

Where's the bathroom?

DOUG LEWIS

Well I dug a hole over by those trees.

PATTY MITCHELL

A hole?

DEBRA

I'll take you; I need to go too.

CAITLYN DYER

Me too.

PATTY MITCHELL

I can wait.

(DEBRA, CAITLYN, and KAYLA exit SL.)

BILLY JOE

Stars sure are pretty tonight.

MELISSA HALL

Yes, the cosmic mother…

MARY JOE

Will you please hush with all that cosmic mumbo-jumbo. I spent half my life in the woods, and I never seen any of these cosmic spirits and universal energy you been talking about.

MELISSA HALL

Obviously you haven't been opening your eyes.

MARY JOE

Look at me, my eyes is open. Open wide too…

(looks around)

nope, no cosmic forces.

MELISSA HALL

Your negative energy is preventing you from seeing them.

MARY JOE

No, I gist think you ate too many paint chips as a child.

EMILY DYER

Must we always fight?

MARY JOE

Well looky here it's the conversation police, sorry didn't mean to upset you. Wouldn't want to get you and yer daughters upset, might plot against me.

EMILY DYER

What are you talking about?

MARY JOE

My son seen the whole thing, yer daughter and that boy plotting against that Mr. Mitchell. Wanted to kill him they did.

EMILY DYER

What?

BILLY JOE

Seen the whole thing with my very eyes. I was climbing a tree trying to find some berries and I seen Caitlyn holding Luis in her arms, and they was talking to each other. And sure as shooting few minutes later Caitlyn suggests to Mr. Mitchell to go climb a tree. Then he comes running back with bees all over him and Luis electrocutes him.

DOUG LEWIS

That's ridiculous. It was a complete accident.

MARY JOE

That's gist because it's yer son, if it was you that was killed, you'd be thinking something different.

(CAITLYN, KAYLA and DEBRA enter SR. DEBRA is holding a snake.)

DEBRA

And now for your viewing pleasure the mountain top theater is proud to present Debra as Cleopatra in an excerpt from Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra.

BILLY JOE

Ah, Mrs. Debra.

DEBRA

I'm trying to get into character.

BILLY JOE

But…

DEBRA

Autographs after the show.

(pause)

Is that an asp I see before me.

(She gets bitten and has a very tragic death. Everyone applauds.)

SUSAN

Bravo… bravo, such passion, such grace.

DOUG LEWIS

Very good Debra, you can get up now.

BILLY JOE

I don't think she can?

DOUG LEWIS

(rushing to DEBRA)

What?

SUSAN

(kneeling beside DEBRA)

Mother?

BILLY JOE

I tried to tell her, that's not my snake, that was a poisonous one, and a not too happy poisonous one too.

DOUG LEWIS

Debra, Debra… it's true, she's dead.

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Scene 4

Setting: The stage is dark, the fire is dying out.

At Rise: Everyone is in their sleeping bags around the campfire. In the darkness KAYLA creeps on stage from SL and places something in BILLY JOE's sleeping bag. RANGER RICK, who has been unseen, turns on his flashlight.

RANGER RICK

Trouble sleeping?

KAYLA HALL

What? No… I mean yes… just sleep walking.

RANGER RICK *(standing)*

I don't think so.

DOUG LEWIS

(waking up)

What's going on?

RANGER RICK

I just caught your killer trying to take out the backwoods boy.

DOUG LEWIS

What? Everybody up.

(Everyone slowly gets up.)

DOUG LEWIS

Luis get that fire going.

EMILY DYER

What's going on?

MARY JOE

Who interrupted my beauty sleep?

DOUG LEWIS

Ranger Rick says he caught Kayla trying to murder Billy Joe.

BILLY JOE

What?

KAYLA HALL

What are you talking about?

MELISSA HALL

My child would never harm a living creature.

RANGER RICK

Then why was she putting this into Billy Joe's sleeping bag.

(He pulls out the tent bag.)

EMILY DYER

What is that?

LUIS LEWIS

It's the bag to the tent-o-rama 3000.

MELISSA HALL

You see it's just a bag.

RANGER RICK

Yes, a bag that Billy Joe is deathly allergic to. I suspected you the entire time.

KAYLA HALL

Really?

RANGER RICK

Well… no I just had trouble sleeping and luckily you tried to murder someone.

MELISSA HALL

Kayla, it couldn't have been you, not my star child.

KAYLA HALL

I'm sorry mother, I'm sorry.

(KAYLA grabs MELISSA and picks up a marshmallow stick and holds it to MELISSA's throat.)

KAYLA HALL

Stand back or she gets skewered… I'll do it, I will.

DOUG LEWIS

Kayla I don't understand.

KAYLA HALL

It was easy, I rewired Mr. Mitchell's phone. I knew it was just a matter of time till the moron used it and electrocuted himself. I gave the snake to Mrs. Debra and told her it was harmless. And Kelly, well you can't have a campout without marshmallows.

MELISSA HALL

But why?

KAYLA HALL

The tree's… the trees made me do it, they're always watching.

(DEBRA sneaks on from behind KAYLA. She picks up a log and hits her on the head. KAYLA falls to the ground.)

SUSAN

Mom!

DOUG LEWIS

Debra!

MARY JOE

I thought you was dead.

DEBRA

Exactly what I wanted you to think. I figured it out when Kayla gave me a snake, I knew to be poisonous. I thought it would be better to wait in the shadows and make my dramatic entrance at the critical moment.

SUSAN

But how did you know it was poisonous?

DEBRA

A little hint I once learned from a boy scout master.

BILLY JOE

But how'd you stop breathing and all.

DEBRA

Diaphragm control, I teach a class on Thursdays if you're interested.

EMILY DYER

What do we do now?

RANGER RICK

I say we tie her up get some sleep and get out of here come morning.

DOUG LEWIS

I agree.

SUSAN

Mom, I’m so proud of you.

DEBRA

Thank you Susan, and scene.

(The End)



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