

SUMMER CAMP

HAL AMES



“I don’t want to go to camp! I want to stay home and hang out with my friends. This isn’t fair. You made all of these plans without talking to me about it.” Karston screamed in anger at his parents, “I’m not going!”

Tomorrow was to be his first day of summer vacation, and now his parents were telling him about the camp. He had already made plans to go the park to meet with his friends, but now he was going to leave the next day early in the morning.

Karston ran out of the kitchen and up to his room. When he entered his room, he was surprised to see lying on his bed, two bags already packed. The big one was a duffle bag his parents had gotten from the Army surplus store, and the other was an oversized backpack. To him it looked like he was leaving for the army.

On the floor were two new pairs of shoes. A pair of hiking boots and a pair of climbing shoes.

He sat on his bed and looked out the window at the trees gently swaying in the wind. A small bird landed in the branches and began to sing. He had never seen a bird like this before. He went over to the window to get a closer look at it. It was small and yellow with a brown head.

It didn’t take long for Karston to find a picture of the bird on his computer. Under the picture it said it was a yellow pine finch.

Karston liked looking stuff like that up on his computer, but now, for the entire summer, he would not be able to use it. His parents had told him the camp he was going to was a nature camp – no computer, no cellphone, no internet – NOTHING! This was

going to be the worst summer ever.

The camp's name was Camp Kinawasha for Boys. His father told him that he had gone there when he was a youngster, and now he wanted Karston to have the same experience. He told Karston it would be good for him to meet new people and that the experience would change his life.

This was not what he wanted to hear, nor was it anything he wanted to do.

His father didn't like Karston's friends; in fact, he hadn't like any of his friends since Karston was in the third grade. His dad was always saying to him that they were a bad influence on him. It made him angry because his father had never even met any of his friends.

Karston was a city boy. He liked living in the city because it always provided something to do, whether good or bad. He liked listening to his music and riding his skateboard. He and his friends got yelled at for riding on the sidewalks. It didn't matter to him or his friends. They were having fun.

One day he and his friends got caught shop lifting from the store in his neighborhood. The police told him he wasn't allowed to go there anymore. Again, it didn't matter, there were plenty of other places to go and hang out.

He dressed like a city boy: baggy pants, oversized sleeveless t-shirt, high top black Converse shoes, and he always had a hat, which he wore backwards. He wanted to get tattoos, but he was too young to get one without his parent's consent. He was a tough kid and was always ready for a fight. Karston was big for his age, and as a result, he usually won.

Karston's hair was black. He used hair dye to make it as black as possible. He liked it that way. It was short on the sides and spiked on top. He had a small scar on his right cheek from he got into fight when he was twelve.

Now his parents were sending him to a camp, away from the city, where everything was going to be different. He was angry and thought about running away.

He called one of his friends.

“Hey, John. Guess what? My parents are sending me to a summer camp and I’ll be gone for the whole vacation. Doesn’t that suck?” Karston told his friend on his cellphone.

“Yeah, that does suck. When do you leave?” John inquired.

“Tomorrow morning. It’s about three hours from here, and it’s in the middle of nowhere – out in the boonies.

“Ya know what? I think I want to run away. Can I stay at your place?” Karston asked.

“It’d be cool with me, but my folks are friends with your parents, so I don’t think they would let you stay here. Sorry ‘bout that,” John answered.

“I get it. Thanks anyway. You should see what they packed for me. It feels like I’m going into the army. Everything is from the Army surplus store. It’s so uncool,” Karston expressed his frustration to John.

They talked for a while and then Karston’s mother called him to come to dinner.

There was silence at the table. No one said a word. Karston did his best to look like a lost puppy so his parents would change their minds. It didn’t work.

After dinner, Karston helped his mom clean the dishes.

“This is a surprise. You haven’t helped me in the kitchen for a long time. This is nice,” his mom commented.

“If I helped you more, would I be able to stay home?” Karston pleaded.

“The money has already been sent in and the plans have been made. Thank you for offering to help though. It’s fun to spend time with you,” his mother said with a smile.

“I know you aren’t excited about this, but your dad and I feel this will be a good learning experience for you. Think of it as an adventure,” his mom tried to give him a positive spin on the idea of going to camp.

“Mom, none of my friends are going to be there. I’m not going to know anyone. The camp is in the middle of nowhere. I don’t know anything about living in the countryside. This is such a stupid idea. Why do I have to go?” Karston said to his mother and then walked out of the room without waiting for an answer, which he already knew

the answer to.

He went to the TV room and turned on the set. He sat sideways in the recliner and channel surfed with the remote, not really watching anything special.

When his dad walked in, Karston commented in a less than respectful manner, “Well, I guess I won’t be able to do this for a while, will I?”

His father chuckled and walked out of the room.

The next morning, Karston’s mom woke him up. He rolled over and looked at the clock. It was 6:30. This was the first day of summer vacation and he was getting up at 6:30! He pulled the blanket over his head.

Not long afterward, his father came in and pulled the blanket off his bed.

“Hey, what did you do that for?!” Karston exclaimed. “Do you realize how early it is?”

“I sure do. It’s time for you to get up and get ready to leave,” his father explained.

“I’m not going. I’m gonna stay right here in bed. You can’t make me,” Karston yelled back as he rolled away from his dad.

“We can do this easy way or the hard way, which way do you want it?” his dad asked in a stern voice.

Karston knew what the tone of his voice meant so he obeyed. Not wanting to start a fight with his dad, Karston jumped out of bed and headed toward the bathroom muttering something under his breath. Karston was a big kid, but his dad was a lot bigger.

About thirty minutes later Karston came down to the kitchen table to eat breakfast.

“You’re serious about this whole camp thing, aren’t you?” Karston asked sarcastically.

“As serious as heart attack son,” his father replied not looking up from reading the news on his tablet.

The drive to the camp took about three hours. Karston just sat in the back seat listening to his music and staring out of the window. They had taken trips before, but they were always to visit relatives. He had never gone to a summer camp before.

Then he saw the sign: “Camp Kinawasha for Boys”.

The sign was not very big and had a picture of an Indian on it, with fish and birds and other forest animals around the edges.

“Boy, this is gonna be exciting,” Karston said to himself in a sarcastic tone. “I get to spend the summer with an Indian.”

When they pulled up to the main building there were many cars already there. Boys were running around yelling and screaming. On the porch of the building, there were stacks of bags waiting to go to the cabins below.

When Karston and his parents got out of the car, his dad went to the back and opened the trunk.

“Come on Karston, get your stuff out of here, and take it to the porch. Then we’ll go inside and get you registered,” his dad yelled at Karston, who was staring at the crazy kids running around. Most of them were much younger than he was.

He looked a lot different from them. Most of them had on white t-shirts and shorts.

Karston followed his father’s instructions and got the bags out of the trunk. They were pretty heavy, but Karston made it look easy. He wanted to impress everyone as to how strong he was.

After dropping the bags on the porch, he and his parents went inside.

The office was very rustic. The walls were natural pine boards and the ceiling was high. There were a couple of comfortable looking chairs in the corner and large fireplace with several pictures on the mantle.

On the walls were stuffed animals: bear, deer, raccoon, and a moose. There were bows and arrows along with other things from an old Indian camp. On the floor were hand woven rugs.

At the back of the room was a long counter and families were lined up waiting to register their children.

The two boys next to Karston began to laugh at him.

“Have you ever seen anyone dressed like that before?” one of the boys

commented.

“I think in a movie once,” the second boy laughed.

Karston just ignored them. He knew he could take care of them later.

When they got to the counter, a young man asked for Karston’s name.

“Karston Youngers,” his father responded.

“Ah, here it is. Your son will be in cabin number 24. His leader’s name is Kent Daring. His team name is Masuka and his color is red. Do you have any money you want to put onto his account at the canteen?” The young man asked.

“Sure, here is fifty dollars,” Mr. Younger handed a fifty-dollar bill to the young man behind the counter.

“Here’s your receipt and here’s Karston’s paperwork to take to his leader. I hope you have a great time here at Camp Kinawasha.

As they were walking out of the building, Karston’s father recognized someone and said, “Bucky, it’s great to see you?”

All the old man said was, “Hello”, and then he walked past him into the building.

“Karston, that’s Bucky. He’s the owner of the camp. I’m sure he doesn’t recognize me since it’s been over twenty years since I was here. You’ll get to know him, I’m sure,” Karston’s dad explained.

Bucky was an older man. He was almost completely bald except for a little bit of silver grey hair around his ears. He had a scruffy beard and a ruddy face, which made him look like he had been in a war zone for a very long time.

He was smoking a pipe most of the time. He would constantly light the pipe with his silver lighter. He had glaring unkind eyes that made one feel small when he looked at them. His voice was gravely and stern. He did not like people to talk to him, nor did he like small talk. He would say what he had to say, then turn, and leave. Usually he would give orders to his staff and then disappear. All of the boys and the counselors were afraid of him.

He walked with a limp. Later Karston found out that he had been shot in the buttocks

while serving in Vietnam. One of the members of his own outfit shot him by accident. Karston chuckled when he heard the story, but soon he would learn that no one laughed at Bucky. The result of doing so meant bad things would come.

Karston's parents walked him to his cabin. It was the last one before going to the lake. Karston's father had stayed in cabin 11.

The camp was quite scenic. Tall trees with cabins nestled between them. The paths to each of the houses were lined with white rocks and covered in small stones.

When they got to the door of his cabin, a college age looking young man met them. "Hi, I'm Kent. Who are you?" he asked.

"I'm Karston Youngers. I think I'm supposed to live here," he said as he father gave Kent the papers.

"Yep, you're in here. You can have the top bunk on the bed in the corner next to the bathroom. Put your stuff under the bed and then meet me in front of the cabin. We are going to have our first cabin meeting in five minutes," Kent directed Karston.

Karston did as he was told and then said goodbye to his parents. He wanted to cry, but he was not going to look weak in front of the other boys.

In front of the cabin was a flagpole and flying from the top was a red flag. Around the pole were big rocks. There was one rock for each of the boys in the cabin.

Karston looked at the other boys. They were not the kind of kids he would ever want to hang out with. They were so childish.

"OK, I'm Kent and I'm your cabin leader for the summer. I'll be replacing your parents. You'll do what I ask you to do or you'll have consequences. There are many chores that need to be done here, and volunteer labor is always welcome. Screw up and you'll get to volunteer.

"I've got red shirts and bandanas for you to wear. You must keep your colors on you at all times. It's your identity. We're the Masuka, and you're gonna be proud of this.

"Every morning we'll meet here at 6:30 for morning exercises. Don't be late. After that, we'll clean the cabin before breakfast. We'll sit together for all our meals. We'll go

to all of our activities as a group. We are the Masuka. Remember that.

“Go inside, fix up your beds and then we’ll meet back here in fifteen minutes. After that, we’ll go to lunch,” Kent finished his instructions.

Karston followed the other boys into the cabin. He went to his bed, climbed up to his cot and lay down. He took his MP3 player out of his pocket, put the earplugs in his ears, folded his hands behind his head, and closed his eyes.

Suddenly he found himself on the floor. Someone had pulled him off his bed so fast he was not able to stop it.

Karston jumped to his feet.

“Hey what’s up with that?” Karston yelled.

Kent got in his face.

“Give me your music and your earplugs,” he said sternly looking Karston square in the eye.

“Not a chance,” Karston replied holding his ground.

“You don’t want me to rip them out of your ears, do you? I said, take them off, and give them to me, NOW!” Kent screamed in Karston’s face.

“Fine, you want them, then go get them,” Karston said defiantly as he took them and threw them across the floor.

“You pick those up now or you will be washing floors all week. Move it, Now!” Kent did not back down.

“Who’s gonna make me?” Karston stated.

Karston suddenly found himself on the floor with his arm pushed up his back so that it hurt. Kent’s knee was in the middle of his back. Karston was helpless.

“OK, smart guy. We can do this my way or your way, and I’m tellin’ ya what. My way is going to be whole lot easier. Get those earplugs and bring them to me, Got it?” Kent demanded.

“Ok, Ok, you don’t have to hurt me ya know,” Karston answered.

As soon as Kent let go, Karston bolted for the door.

Two of the boys jumped in front of him and knocked him to the floor.

“So, you guys want a piece of this? Fine with me. Let’s rumble!” Karston said as he jumped up off the floor.

Before Karston could move, all of the boys in the cabin surrounded him. It was twelve to one. Karston did not care. He started to fight all of them.

As soon as it began, it was over. Karston was on the floor again helpless. Kent was on top of him and he couldn’t move.

He yelled at the boys, “Get off of me!”

He threatened them, but it didn’t matter, he was unable to move.

When Karston had calmed down, the boys let him go. He got onto his feet and immediately ran out the door - down toward the lake.

When he got there, he found a big rock and sat on it looking over the water. He sat there for a long time wondering how he could get away from the camp and go home.

A loud bell began to ring and then there was the noise of boys yelling as they ran to the dining hall for lunch. Karston just sat. He did not feel hungry.

He gazed out across the lake and watched the birds dart back and forth over the water.

He was deep in thought when he realized there were several people surrounding him. They had sticks in their hands and mean looking faces. They were the camp counselors.

Karston jumped off the rock and then stepped backward.

Kent moved toward Karston and said, “You’re going to learn how to follow the rules or face the consequences. You may think you’re a tough city kid, but you haven’t seen what we country boys can do.”

Behind him appeared Bucky. He limped slowly around the rock looking at Karston while smoke rose from his pipe. He didn’t say a word. He just kept staring at Karston.

Finally, he spoke up, “Son, I’ve been doing this for a long time, and you are the worst case I have ever come across. I looked at your file, so none of this surprises me. I

knew you were going to be like this. You're just a punk who thinks he is so tough that he can handle anyone or anything. Well, I've got news for you kid. This is going to be harder on you than it's going to be on us. Get your act together, or life here is going to be miserable."

"It can't get any worse than it already is!" Karston blurted out.

"We'll see about that," Bucky responded. "Boys, show this kid how we handle stupid little boys at Camp Kinashawa."

Kent walked up to Karston and knocked his hat to the ground.

"That's my hat, give it back!" yelled Karston.

"You're not going to need it anymore, smart mouth. It's time for your first lesson," Kent answered as he tossed the hat into the forest.

Bucky walked away while the counselors began to threaten to hit Karston with their sticks.

Karston curled up in a ball and yelled at the attackers, "Stop it! You can't do this to me. My parents are going to sue!"

"Who do you think sent you to this camp?" Kent yelled back.

The counselors dragged Karston back to his cabin and put him up onto his bed. Kent stayed in the room to make sure he did not try to leave again.

Karston sobbed as he curled up in a ball. He didn't feel so tough.

He thought to himself, "Why did my parents send me here. What did I do that was so bad that I had to come here?"

The other boys returned from lunch to prepare for the afternoon activities. When they looked up at Karston, a boy said, "You don't look so tough now, city boy."

Another of the boys yelled out, "Hey tough guy! Looks like you got taught a lesson!"

The other boys laughed and then walked out.

"Get down from there, it's time to go with the group to our first event," Kent yelled up at Karston.

He just kept staring at the wall.

“Do you want me to bring my friends back?” Kent threatened.

Karston rolled over and jumped to the floor. He did not say a word. He just glared at Kent as he walked past him.

Kent took his stick and slapped Karston on back with a crack.

“What’d you do that for?” Karston turned sharply and faced Kent.

“You’re a slow learner, aren’t you, tough guy?” Kent said as he pushed Karston backward toward the door.

When they got outside, he saw the other campers sitting on the rocks around the flagpole. When they saw Karston, they began to laugh.

“So the city boy isn’t so tough.”

Another said, “He got what he deserved.”

Karston began to run toward the boy who had spoken, but just as took his first step, he ended on the ground in the dirt. Kent had tripped him with the stick.

“I’m pretty handy with this thing,” Kent showed him the stick. “Don’t test me,” Kent said leaning over Karston.

“You wouldn’t be so bad if you didn’t have that stick,” Karston talked back.

Kent tossed the stick to one of the campers and motioned for Karston to get up.

“Come on tough guy, let’s see what you’ve got,” Kent taunted Karston.

Karston got up slowly, brushed the dirt off his pants, and then lunged at Kent, only to find himself in the dirt again.

Karston got up again. He looked into Kent’s eyes as he moved slowly back into the circle of rocks. Kent just stood in his place watching Karston closely.

The boys began to chant, “Come on tough guy, show us what you got?”

Karston circled around Kent, waiting for a chance to find a weakness. When Kent put his hands down, Karston jumped at him. This time Karston went flying over Kent’s head and then landed with a thud on the ground. Karston could not breathe. The wind had been knocked out of him.

When he finally got his breath back, he lay gasping for air. He rolled over and coughed. The other boys laughed at him.

“What’s the matter tough guy, can’t fight?” one of the boys said laughing.

Karston looked up at them and watched what they were doing. He slowly got to his feet, brushed the dirt off his clothes, and then just stood still.

The boys became silent. They were waiting for Karston to try something else.

He looked at each one of them, and then turned and walked toward the lake.

“Get back here Karston!” Kent demanded. “You have to come with us.”

Looking back at Kent, he broke into a run. He ran into the woods, jumping over logs and broken limbs. He pushed the branches of the trees out of his face. He didn’t know where he was going, he just ran.

He could see the sun coming through the trees so he headed toward a clearing. When he left the forest, in front of him was a large field. He kept running. He could see a cornfield on the other side, so he decided to run there.

Karston had run track in school and he was in good shape from riding his skateboard all the time. It felt good to be running. It was better than being beat up.

He entered the cornfield and ran between the rows of corn. He knocked down some of the plants as he ran. Soon he came to another opening. Sitting in front of him was a pickup truck.

He looked around to see if anyone was following him and then he jumped up into the back in order to hide. As he listened to see if anyone was following him, he looked through the cab of the truck and out the windshield.

While he was doing this, he noticed there were keys in the ignition. He thought if he could start the truck, he would be able to get a lot farther faster. Maybe then, he could find some help.

Karston jumped out of the bed of the truck and opened the door. He brushed away some dirt from the seat and then climbed behind the steering wheel. He turned the key. It made the right sound, but the truck did not start.

He tried it again, and this time the engine turned over. He had never driven before, but he had a simulator on his computer at home. He put the truck in gear and pushed on the gas. The truck went backward. He pushed the brake and looked to see what he had done wrong. The needle was pointing to “R”. He grabbed the lever and moved the pointer to “D”. Then he pushed the gas and the truck took off. He looked in the rear mirror and saw five or six boys come out of the cornfield. He had gotten off just in time.

He bounced up and down as the truck raced forward. The road was narrow and had many bumps in it. He looked in the mirror again and watched the dust as it flew up behind him.

Suddenly the truck began to sputter. There was no power. He looked at the gas gauge. It said empty. Now he was going to have to run again. He got out of the truck and began to run.

He found a small creek. He took off his shoes, and then wrapped the shoes around his neck. He stepped into the creek with his bare feet and walked around in the water making it all muddy. He went upstream and downstream making the water as dirty as he could, then he grabbed a branch that was hanging over the creek and pulled himself up into the tree.

He thought that this might make anyone following think he had gone down the stream to hide his tracks. He climbed high into the tree and watched to see if anyone was coming. While in the tree he put his socks and shoes back on. He sat as quietly as he could. No one came.

After a while, he slowly climbed out of the tree and headed up along the side of the creek. He found another dirt road. Hoping he had put enough distance between himself and the boys who were chasing him, he jogged down the road not knowing where he was going to end up.

He found an old red brick house with a large tree in the yard. Hanging from the branches was a swing with one of the ropes broken. As he walked around the house to see if anyone was there, he noticed the doors to the cellar were opened, so he crawled in and

closed them over himself. He sat in the darkness as quietly as he could. The silence was hard to take.

Sitting in the dark made him more frightened. What if there were animals in there? What if a spider bit him?

He got so scared he decided to leave. He thought it should be safe now.

Slowly, he crawled out of the basement of the old house. He ran into the corn again and ran until he came to edge of the cornfield.

Ahead of him, he saw a highway. He thought to himself, "If I can get to the highway I can wave down a driver and get a ride. I'll go to the town and get some help. Those people at the camp are crazy. I'm sure they know that."

As he exited the cornfield, he saw the road. Not knowing which way to go he just turned to the right and began running as fast as he could. He heard a car behind him, so he stopped and waved. The car flew past.

He began to run again.

Soon he heard another car.

Again, he waved, and this time the car pulled over a few yards in front of him.

The door opened, and Karston got inside. The car pulled back onto the road.

"Where are you going young man? You're a long way from town," the man driving the car asked.

Karston was still breathing hard and was unable to answer right away.

Finally, when he able to speak, he replied, "I need to get home. I need to get away from those crazy people at the camp. People are trying to kill me!"

"What do you mean?" the man asked.

"My parents sent me to this camp. They must hate me there. Now they are chasing me. I need to get to a phone and call my dad. Do you have a cellphone I can use?" Karston asked.

"No, I don't have a cellphone. They don't work out here, but I'm sure I can find you a phone in town," the man offered.

“That would be great. How much farther until we get to the town?” Karston asked.

“About five more minutes,” he answered.

It was silent in the car as they sped down the road toward the town. Karston looked in the mirror on the side of the car to see if anyone was following them.

Suddenly the car came to a stop.

“Get out!” the man yelled at him. “Get out of my car now!”

Shocked, Karston opened the door and got out. As soon as he closed the door, the car took off in a cloud of dust, leaving him standing on the side of the road.

“What just happened?” Karston said aloud.

He began to run again, waiting for another car to come.

Just then, from out of the cornfield along the road, and to his surprise, all of the counselors were waiting for him. They had their sticks in their hands.

Karston turned to run, but just as he did, a group of boys came out. There was nowhere for him to go.

He turned around, faced the counselors, dropped to his knees, and put his hands on his head.

“I give up. I hate this place. Go ahead and kill me,” Karston said.

Looking up he saw Bucky who had just arrived in his car.

The counselors started to raise their sticks, but Bucky told them to stop.

“Wait! Don’t touch the boy. He’s been through enough today.”

Then he spoke to Karston, “Get up son, get into my car. I’ll take you back.”

Karston got up slowly from the ground and walked past the counselors who were looking at him, challenging him to a fight. He just ignored them and opened the car door. He was too tired to do anything else.

Karston slumped in the front seat exhausted.

Put on your seatbelt, son. It’s the law,” Bucky directed Karston.

There was silence in the car as Bucky prepared to drive away. First, he had to light his pipe and then he turned the key to start the car.

Once the car was moving, Bucky spoke up, “You remind me a lot of your father, you know that?”

“My father? What do you mean?” Karston asked, surprised at the statement.

“Your father came to my camp, oh, about twenty years ago or so. He was a strong willed boy. He had a tough time here at Camp Kinawasha. He didn’t like anyone and no one liked him,” Bucky shared.

“He said you didn’t remember him when he said hello you to you earlier today,” Karston relayed the story of what his father had said.

“Oh, I remembered him. He knows that,” Bucky responded while lighting his pipe again. “Your father is not one who is easily forgotten.”

“What did my father do?” Karston asked.

“That’s a story for another day. You need to get back to the camp and get cleaned up. It is almost time for supper,” Bucky responded, while once again lighting his pipe.

It was farther to the camp than Karston had thought. He had gone a long way.

When the car pulled up in front of the main office, standing on the porch was his father.

As soon as the car came to a stop, Karston jumped out and ran to his dad.

“Dad, they’ve been trying to kill me. I want to go home. Get me out of here?” Karston panicked.

“They aren’t going to kill you. They just want to teach you lesson,” His dad responded.

“Teach me a lesson? What do you mean?” Karston asked.

“Come inside. We’ll talk about it,” Mr. Youngers gently took Karston’s arm and opened the door.

Karston was confused. What was his father doing? Why was he still there?

“Dad, I thought you would be on your way home by now. What are you doing here?” Karston queried his dad.

“Sit down, I’ll try to explain it to you,” his dad said as he and Karston sat in the big

chairs in the corner of the room.

“It’s like this. When I came to this camp years ago, I was a lot like you. I was stubborn and independent. I wanted to do only what I wanted, not anything else. Bucky and his staff helped me to realize that I was wrong. I needed to change. It took some persuading, but I got the message.

“I asked Bucky to do the same for you, only you proved to be even more stubborn and independent than I was. He didn’t expect you to run away as far as you did.

“I didn’t mean for them to hurt you, but your mother and I didn’t know any other way to get through to you,” his dad began to explain.

“You mean you knew all about this? You’ve been here the whole time?” Karston yelled as he stood up in anger.

“Yes, I knew about most of it, but I just arrived a few minutes before you drove up. I took your mother to a motel in town, and we were getting settled in our room when Bucky called to tell me about your status. I was pretty surprised at how resourceful you have been,” his dad answered. “They have a GPS device and they knew where you were all the time.”

“A GPS? Where?” Karston asked as he looked at his shirt and pants.

“It’s in your shoe,” his dad pointed to his left high top.

“The man who picked you up on the road was also part of the team. Also, there were videos of what you were doing and where you were going made from a drone. Everything you did and everywhere you went was recorded. Do you want to see it?” his dad asked.

“Are you serious? There is a recording of all of this? That should be proof to take them to court!” Karston yelled at his dad.

“Were you really hurt?” his father asked.

“No, not really. It’s just don’t like it here. Can we go home?” he begged his dad.

Answering his question, his dad tried to make him understand, “I don’t think so. You need to find a way to get along with these people. You’re going to find that life is

not easy. There are many lessons we all have to learn in life. Now is the time to learn them because if you wait, it might be too late for you.”

Bucky walked in and smiled at Karston.

He said, “Son, there are a lot of people out here who have something to say to you.”

Even though Karston was tired and dirty, he went to the door. All of the campers and counselors were outside of the office waiting for him. When he stepped out of the door, they clapped for him.

Karston turned to his father, and asked, “Why are they clapping? What did I do?”

“They are letting you know they want to be your friends. They respect you and they’re impressed with how you handled yourself. Give them a chance. You might find you have more in common with them than you think.

“You’ve got to be crazy. These guys hate me, and I hate them. They’re all a bunch of losers,” Karston began to turn to go back into the office.

“Wait a minute!” Bucky said. “You’ve judged these boys the same way they’ve judged you. If you go on this way with your life, you’ll never know who your real friends are. Just because you are from the city and these boys aren’t, doesn’t mean you can’t learn to like each other. Maybe you might even become friends.

Bucky spoke up, “Your dad is a perfect example. Why do you think he is successful at his work?”

“I don’t know. Why?” Karston answered with a puzzled look on his face.

“Because he knows how to treat people well. He makes people feel comfortable with him, but it wasn’t always like that,” Bucky explained.

Karston looked at the boys in front of him.

“I guess I can give it a try,” Karston said, as he stepped down off the porch.

He was immediately surrounded by the crowd as they chanted “Karston, Karston, Karston!”

Kent called out to him, “Come on kid, get cleaned up. It’s almost time for supper.”