

Amber's Song



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Amber's Song



By Olivia, Camryn, and Kaitlyn Pitts

With Janel Rodriguez Ferrer

ZONDERkidz

ZONDERKIDZ

Amber's Song

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From Olivia:

To my mommy for always helping me find my happy place. And to all of my big sisters for being there for me.

From For Girls Like:

To our team for continuing to create, inspire and shape girls in the love of Jesus.

To our support family for being God's wind in our sails.



Chapter 1



And there you go! *Voila!*” From her seat on the couch, my big sister, Lena, pronounced my hair done. “Take a look,” she said. She passed her cell phone down to me.

I sat on the carpeted floor of my aunt’s living room with my back to Lena. Taking the phone, I looked at the photo she’d snapped of the back of my head. Pretty braids covered my head in neat rows and flowed down my back.

I turned my head from side to side. “Wow!” I grinned. “Nice job, Lena.”

Our Aunt Trini, who was sitting next to Lena on the couch, smiled proudly at both of us. “You’re good with your hands, Lena. Maybe it’s from all that guitar playing. It looks like you’ll be an expert at braiding hair in no time.”

Lena shook her head. “I only did okay because you were right next to me. Without you showing me what to do—or fixing my mistakes—her hair would never have come out this nice.”

“Well, I *am* a professional hairstylist,” Aunt Trini reminded her. “I have had years of experience. But that’s why you should believe me when I say you did a good job.”

“Okay,” Lena said with a small smile.

Springing to my feet, I handed the phone back to Lena just as Aunt Trini gave me a hand mirror to look into. I checked my braids out again and flipped some with my free hand. “Even

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though I'm *not* a professional," I said, "I think they look great too. Thanks, Lena! I really love them!"

"And while they're very pretty," Aunt Trini said, taking the mirror back from me, "they will also be practical for camp. The braids will keep your hair out of your face when you're doing sports. But remember what I told you about washing your hair and protecting it with conditioner before going into the pool."

"I will," I promised.

Aunt Trini sifted through my braids playfully. "And you can always tie them in a long—not to mention fabulous—ponytail when you want to."

"A 'fabulous ponytail!'" I laughed and jokingly did a small runway walk in front of the couch. I ended it with a toss of my head that flipped my braids behind my back. "Fabulous!"

I heard laughter from my other two sisters who were sitting on the other couch. I looked over at them. But something about the way they giggled made me know they weren't laughing at my goofing around. They were laughing about something else.

Then I saw the reason! Middle-sister Ansley and my twin, Ashton, were sitting side-by-side on the couch just like Lena and Aunt Trini were. Only they were weaving tiny, funny-looking braids into our dad's short, curly hair. They were also clipping pink, sparkly barrettes on the end of each braid. Dad didn't know. Because even though he was sitting on the floor, like I had been, his eyes were closed *and* he was taking slow, deep breaths. He had fallen asleep! I clapped both hands over my mouth and giggled.

Dad, my sisters, and I were all staying at Aunt Trinity's house in Texas for a few weeks that summer. She had spent a lot of our visit showing us sisters how to style each other's hair

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in different ways. We needed to learn because our mom knew lots of ways to style our hair but sadly she died last year. We really missed not having her around to love us and to teach us about God. But we also missed the smaller things she used to do—like our hair. Dad’s sister, our aunt Samantha, lived with us now. And she did our hair most of the time when we were home in Tennessee. But since it was Aunt Trini who had first taught Mom how to do hair, she decided that she was going to teach us girls too. At least as much as she could during our visit. The braids on my father’s head, though, made it look like some of us needed more practice!

Trying to be as quiet as possible, I waved in Lena’s face, held a finger up to my lips, and pointed over at Dad. Lena and Aunt Trini both caught sight of his new hairdo just as the doorbell rang.

Dad’s eyes flew open. He scrambled to his feet. “I’ll get it,” he mumbled.

We sisters squealed with laughter.

Aunt Trini stood up. “Um, wait, why don’t I . . . ?”

But in a few long strides, Dad had already made it to the front door. “Hello, Gio!” we heard him say.

“Hi there . . . Mr. . . . Daniels,” a familiar voice replied. The surprised quiver in her voice made it sound like she was trying not to laugh.

Ashton and I gasped. “Giovanna!” we said together and ran for the door.

Giovanna Rossi was an old friend of ours from when we used to live in Texas. Since we moved away right after our mother died, we hadn’t seen her in person for a year. She had come to stay over at our aunt’s house for the night so we could

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all get an early start to camp the next day. Dad was going to drive us all there.

When Ashton and I reached the front door, we saw Gio grinning widely as she stared up at our father's hairdo.

"Oh!" Dad brought a hand up to the top of his head and he began touching the barrettes. He burst out laughing. "As you can see, I just came from the salon."

"It's really you," Mrs. Rossi said in an amused voice.

"I like to stay on trend," Dad joked. "Come in, come in." He opened the door wider.

"Oh, is it okay if I don't? I have Mr. Rossi waiting in the car." Mrs. Rossi gestured behind her.

"No worries." Dad took Giovanna's trunk from her mother's hand. "Come on in, Gio."

After giving her mother a quick kiss and hug goodbye, Gio ran toward me and Ashton. She squealed. I squealed. Ashton squealed. Then we all took each other's hands, jumped up and down, and squealed some more.

When we stopped jumping and squealing, Gio panted. "I've missed you guys so much!"

"We've missed you too," I said, still holding her hands and swinging them back and forth. "Come on! We'll show you where you'll be sleeping."

We brought Gio to a little study on the ground floor that had a daybed with a pullout bed underneath it. "You can sleep on the top or the bottom, or on the inflatable mattress." Ashton pointed to the cardboard box that was leaning against the wall near the doorway. "It's just not inflated yet."

"It doesn't matter to me," Gio said, flopping herself down



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on the floor. "I can sleep anywhere. Sleeping is like my hobby." She laughed.

It was true. Last year at camp, Gio was always the first to fall asleep, the last to wake up. Ashton usually fell asleep pretty easily too. I know because I was usually the last one to fall asleep. I didn't like the dark. And I couldn't sleep unless I kept a night-light on.

My night-light! Did I remember to pack it? I wondered. *I'd better check.* I had meant to bring my night-light from home. It was shaped like a little cat and gave off a warm, cheerful glow when it was plugged in. I hadn't checked to make sure I had packed it before because I hadn't needed it the past few days. Once Ashton and I were in bed, Aunt Trini always left our bedroom door open a crack and a dim light on in the hallway for us.

I dragged out my trunk from under a nearby desk and began to look through its compartments. *Hmm. Not in the front pocket . . . not in the side pocket . . . not in the other side pocket. Gosh, I hope I didn't leave it back home!* I felt my heart begin to thump fast. I unzipped the small pouch that held my toothbrush and toothpaste with shaking hands and began to search through it. No night-light. *Maybe it's somewhere under all my clothes.* I sighed deeply. The only way to make sure was to take out everything Aunt Sam had neatly packed *and* what I had *secretly* packed. I tried to hide what I was doing from Ashton, who was busy chatting with Gio, but it was impossible. I took out a stack of T-shirts, some pairs of shorts, some sneakers . . .

Ashton stopped talking to Gio and frowned. "What are you do—?" Then she let out a tiny gasp as she caught sight of something soft and white in my suitcase. "You packed your *kitty coat*? In the middle of *summer*?"

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My “kitty coat” was a fluffy, white, fake-fur jacket that had been the last present my mother had given me. When it was new, I wore it practically every day and Mom started calling me her “fluffy little kitty” whenever she saw me with it on. She would even pet me by stroking my “fur” as I snuggled up against her. Soon “fluffy little kitty” got shortened to just “kitty.” And it became Mom’s special nickname for me. Nowadays “Kitty” was the nickname that my whole family called me privately at home.

“Yes . . .” I said. But seeing the look of disbelief on Ashton’s face made my face burn. I turned away from her and suddenly noticed my cat night-light tucked in the side of the suitcase, protected by some rolled-up socks. Feeling a wave of relief pass over me, I snatched it up and gave it a little hug. Then I began covering up my kitty coat with the T-shirts and shorts I had just taken out of the suitcase.

“When do you think you’re going to get the chance to wear it at camp?” Ashton went on. “Plus, it’s going to get so dirty if you do!” She turned to Gio. “Can you believe that? She packed a coat for a Texas summer!” Then she turned back to me only to shake her head. “Did you already forget how ridiculously hot it gets here in the summertime?”

I felt my heart give a pang. I knew everything she said was right, but I didn’t care. “But our cabins are air-conditioned,” I said, still not looking at her. “You know how cool they can get. I can wear the coat like . . . a kind of robe.”

From the corner of my eye, I could see Ashton shake her head again. “You should have just brought a robe then.”

Even though we were twins, Ashton and I were not the identical kind. We didn’t look alike and our personalities were quite different.

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For instance, Ashton was more serious than me. She could also be very practical, which is why she didn't understand why I would want to bring my fluffy coat to camp. She probably even thought it was silly of me. (I could be silly sometimes! It made life more fun!) But I wasn't bringing the coat with me to be silly. It was just that sometimes wearing it made me feel like I was getting hugs from my mom. Plus, Mom had given me the coat more than a year ago. I had grown since then. And although I wasn't much bigger than I was the year before, I was taller than Ashton now—and even Ansley—so I had the feeling that it wouldn't be much longer before I grew out of my coat. I wanted to wear it every chance I could. Even if I had to sleep in it!

Suddenly Gio laughed. "I really *did* miss you guys!" she said. She tucked a lock of hair that had slipped out of her ponytail behind her ear as she looked back and forth from me to Ashton.

"We missed you too!" Ashton and I said together. We got on either side of her and hugged her.

"Twin cuddles!" Gio said. She wrapped an arm around each of us and gave us a squeeze.

When we broke apart, Gio jumped up and pointed to the small, curvy case that leaned against the wall near the door. "What is that? A tiny guitar or something?"

"It's a ukulele," I said. I snatched it up and brought it over to show her. After I unzipped the case, I showed it to her and plucked a few strings. "See?"

"So basically, yeah, a tiny guitar," Gio said, with a grin. She looked me over with wide and shining eyes. "I didn't know you could play!"

"Yeah, well, Lena's been teaching me."

"Maybe you'll get the chance to be a leader of song or

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something,” Gio said, running a finger lightly over the ukulele strings. The theme at camp this year was “All Creation Sings Praise,” which, according to the brochure, meant that there would be singing classes as well as outdoor sports and nature activities. “You know,” Gio continued as I put the uke back in the case, “since you got to sing that solo at the talent show.”

I kind of wanted to just curl up in a blanket and hide when she said that. I mean, actually at *first* it felt like my heart grew wings and zoomed up my chest at her words. Part of me loved-loved-loved the idea of singing on stage. And wanted to do it again as soon as possible. But another part of me froze up inside at the very idea of having to perform in front of a lot of people. On the day of the school talent show that she mentioned, I had been so nervous I thought I was going to throw up before I sang! (I didn’t.) What ended up helping me a lot was that Ashton was on stage with me that day. Although she didn’t sing, she danced. But at least I hadn’t been all alone up there. I just shrugged at Gio’s suggestion. “Maybe.” I put the ukulele back in the case and then on top of the desk. “I’m not bringing it with me. It’s Lena’s,” I explained.

“Girls!” Aunt Trini called from the kitchen down the hall. “Anyone for some freshly popped popcorn?”

Gio, Ashton, and I all exchanged glances. ‘Anyone’? Make that *all* of us! “Coming!” We all yelled together, and we ran out of the room.



Chapter 2

The next morning, before heading off to camp, we all ran around the house making sure we hadn't forgotten anything. We looked like blurs streaking through the rooms. And even though Lena was staying behind with Aunt Trini, she helped us get ready by helping with breakfast and carrying our bags to the minivan.

When Lena took my duffel, Ashton whispered to me, "I hope you remembered to leave your kitty coat here."

I said nothing. I just watched as Lena safely tucked my bag in the back of the van and I smiled a tiny smile. My coat was still inside of it.

After enjoying a noisy and excited breakfast and packing a lunch to eat on the road, we all stood in front of the car and formed a circle. Then, taking each other's hands, we closed our eyes and listened to Dad as he led us in prayer.

"Heavenly Father," he said, "thank you for this day and the opportunity to be a part of this adventure. We don't take your kindness for granted. We ask for your protection and your guidance as the girls head off for camp. Speak to their hearts, Holy Spirit, and use their time to grow them closer to you. In Jesus Name, Amen."

Then, as he settled into the driver's seat and went over a few last-minute things with Aunt Trini, Lena gestured for us girls to gather together.

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"It's been a while since we've done this," she whispered to Ashton, Ansley, and me. "But since we are going to be separated for a little bit, I think it's a good time for it." She stuck out her right hand in the middle of the circle we had formed and began to say, "Even in times when we're apart . . ."

Ansley placed her hand on top of Lena's, Ashton placed her hand on top of Ansley's, and I placed my right hand on top of them all. Then we joined Lena in saying, "The Daniels sisters promise with all our hearts that we'll always be . . ." And we began to chant, "Together *Four*-ever! Together *Four*-ever! Together *Four*-ever! Together *Four*-ever!"

Then we broke our hands apart and cheered and hooted, "Woooooo!" as we jumped up and down.

Finally it was time to go!

Ansley, Ashton, Gio, and I all got in the back seats of the minivan and buckled in.

"I just want to make one stop before we get on the highway," Dad told us as he adjusted his rearview mirror.

"You need to get gas?" I guessed.

"Right." Dad chuckled. "Then make that two stops!"

So our first stop ended up being at the gas station. But the second one turned out to be at our favorite old donut shop! When he pulled up to the store we all cheered. And when he bought a dozen donuts we cheered again. When we set off on the road again, Dad gave us permission to each have a donut immediately if we wanted, and we cheered a third time.

"This is already the best road trip, ever," Giovanna said, taking a bite of her Boston cream donut. "Mmm."

I nodded but my mouth was too full of sprinkles and strawberry glaze to say anything out loud.

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“How about a soundtrack for the trip?” Dad asked and suddenly the soundtrack to *The Winter Sisters*, a Broadway musical we had all seen a few weeks back on a trip to New York, filled the car.

Immediately my sisters and I began to sing along to “It’s Time”—the song we were most obsessed with. We sang loudly and dramatically,

*I know it’s my time
My time to step up.
It’s time to be heard.
It’s my time to speak out,
Make you hear my words.
This is my song . . .*

Dad groaned. “What did I do?”

And we all burst out laughing, knowing how we’d been driving him nuts for weeks singing that around the house. When the song was over, he switched over to some praise and worship music, and “God is Good” by Mallory Winston began to play.

I saw Ashton close her eyes and knew she was imagining the dance she had created for the song and was dancing it in her mind. I started to sing along to this song, too, only not as loudly as before, and all by myself.

“That sounded pretty,” Giovanna said. She licked some icing off her fingertips. “Is that the song you sang in the talent show at your school?”

I nodded. Ashton had danced along to my singing, with our friend, Jasmyn, who was in a wheelchair. We had sent Gio a video of it and a lot of people had seen it online.

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“Maybe you can sing that at camp.” She began looking through a brochure that she found in the back pocket of the driver’s seat. The words “Camp Caracara” were written across the front with a drawing of a caracara bird. “Sounds like we’re going to get to do some singing,” she said. “It says here that there will even be praise and worship karaoke!”

“Holy karaoke?” I said. My surprised voice came out in a squeak. Everyone in the car laughed.

“Holy karaoke!” Gio repeated, laughing some more. “I’ve got to remember to use that!”

Ansley took out a donut from the box and widened her eyes. “Holy karaoke! That’s a lot of sprinkles!” she exclaimed. We all laughed again.

“Holy karaoke, these donuts sure are good!” I said, patting my stomach. More laughter filled the car. And we kept going like that until Dad said, “Holy karaoke! There sure are some silly girls in this car!” Which probably made us laugh the loudest.

I picked up the pamphlet from Gio’s lap and looked through it. “Besides singing, what I’m really looking forward to doing,” I admitted, “is riding a horse again.”

“Me too,” Gio said. “I loved the one I got to ride last year. Do you remember? He was a pinto named Jackson. He was so sweet! I got to feed him and everything. I hope I get him again.”

I nodded. Jackson was what is called a “paint” horse. He was brown with white markings that looked like splashes of paint. He was named after Jackson Pollock, a famous artist who used to splash paint all over his canvases. “But you don’t really get to choose which horse you get, you know,” I reminded her. “They just give one to you.”

Gio shrugged. “Maybe I can ask for him, anyway.”

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I hoped she was right. Last year I had gotten to ride a beautiful horse named Misty. She was a dapple gray horse, which meant that she was dark gray in some places, light gray in others, and even had little white dots scattered on her coat like a fawn. She really did look like she was made of mist, and was the prettiest horse I'd ever seen in real life.



When we finally arrived at camp, it was about noon. The sky was a clean, happy blue, which somehow made all the grass that covered the grounds and all the leaves on the trees look more brightly green. It was like nature itself was excited to see us. The camp counselors were, that's for sure. I say that because as Dad drove us into the campgrounds, our van was surrounded by them. They were all dressed in different colored T-shirts and they welcomed us by cheering and jumping up and down. They waved at us through the windows and held out their hands for high-fives. Dad rolled down the windows and Ansley stretched out her hand to high-five as many as she could before we passed them.

"Phew!" Ansley sat back with a grin as she wiped her forehead in pretend exhaustion. "Twenty in one blow!"

Soon it was time to say good-bye to Dad, and a young woman with long, dark, straight hair and brown skin took down our names and introduced herself to us. "My name is Sonia Dominguez, but everyone here calls me 'Sunny.' I'm glad the three of you are together," she said, meaning me, Ashton and Gio, since Ansley had already left us to check in with the older group. "You three are all assigned to the same cabin. Follow me!"

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She led us to where a group of five other girls were standing. “These are the rest of the girls in your group—” she began, but got cut off when four out of the five girls screamed with joy and ran over to us. “Amber! Ashton! You came! You’re back!”

I was almost knocked down by all the girls wanting to hug me at once.

“I can’t believe you’re here!” a tall girl wearing sports glasses said. “When you moved I thought we’d never see you again!”

I smiled at her. “It’s great to see you, Kaydence!”

“Boy, have I missed you,” a redheaded girl with freckles gave me a squeeze.

“I missed you, too, Tangie,” I said, hugging her back.

“We’re going to have so much fun!” twins Harmony and Heaven said at the same time, and they linked arms and danced around in a circle.

The fifth girl was the only girl I didn’t know from camp last year. Her shoulder-length curly hair looked like it couldn’t decide whether to be brown or blond. She stood away from the rest of us dressed in a purple, tie-dyed T-shirt that was so big it looked like a dress. What was weird was I caught her squinting at me like she needed glasses or something.

I looked back at Sunny, who was smiling down at me and the group hug Amber and I were in with the others. “Awww! Great reunion, you guys. Let’s go. You’re all in Corinthians!” A couple of other counselors came by to help us with our trunks and soon we were all headed toward our cabin.

All the cabins at Camp Caracara were named after books in the Bible. Ours was named after the two letters St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians. And since our cabin was really like two cabins in one (joined together by a large bathroom with lots of sinks,

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showers, and cubbies) one cabin had a sign over the door that read “1 CORINTHIANS” and the other cabin had a sign that said “2 CORINTHIANS.”

When we entered the first cabin, just inside the entrance there was a poster on the wall that read:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

—1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

I had always liked that scripture. One time, Dad, who is a pastor, told me that I could substitute the word “Love” with “God” because God is love. So I began rereading it to myself, “God is patient, God is kind . . .”

“This is your room,” Sunny announced to me, Ashton, Gio, and Kaydence. “You can start settling in.” She pointed to the trunks the other counselors had already hauled to our room.

“You can just leave that there,” I told the counselor who had my trunk. She nodded and set it at the foot of the bunk bed I had chosen.

“The rest of you, follow me.” Sunny led Tangie, Heaven, Harmony, and the new girl through the cubby section and shower room to the bedroom on the other side of the cabin.

“Ahhh,” I said, with a little twirl. I was enjoying the air-conditioning. It felt great since it was so hot out.

Ashton lay down on the bottom bunk of one of the two sets of bunk beds and sighed in agreement. “So cool and refreshing!”

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Gio threw herself on the bottom bunk of the other set of bunk beds. "Time for a nap!" she joked. She began pretending to snore.

I laughed and started to climb up the ladder to the bunk above Ashton. Suddenly a voice from the other room cried out, "NO!" making all of us jump.

I leapt off the ladder and took a peek into the next room. It was the girl in the purple T-shirt. "I am not sleeping on the other top bunk!" she yelled at Sunny. "I'll fall off!" She covered her eyes and ran straight into our room. I had to dodge out of the way.

"I'm sleeping here!" she said, pointing at the bed Gio was sitting on.

Gio crossed her arms. "No way. I can't sleep on the top bunk, either," she said firmly, "and I called dibs on this first."

I knew that wasn't true. Gio could sleep on anything and anywhere. But I didn't say anything.

The new girl burst into tears. "I want to go home!"

We all stared at her and then each other with wide eyes. I turned to Gio to see if she would change her mind, so I was surprised when I heard Ashton sigh. "Fine," she said. "I'll take the other top bunk in the next room."

I slumped my shoulders. My sister and I had bunk beds at home. She always slept in the bottom bunk beneath me. It was what I was used to. I waved sadly at her as she dragged her trunk over into the next room and the new girl sat down on the bottom bunk of my bed. She was all smiles now.

"Thank you, Ashton. That was kind of you," Sunny said as she dragged the new girl's trunk into the room and set it next to mine. "Better, Maxine?"

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The new girl nodded and wiped her eyes. Not that they even looked wet. And, I noticed, *not even a thank you to Ashton or Sunny.*

“Okay, time to change into your swimsuits, girls. You have a swim test in fifteen minutes.” Sunny clapped her hands. “Let’s get moving.”

I hurried over to my trunk, flipped it open, and began hurriedly looking through it for my swimsuit and my hair conditioner. I had to move my fluffy jacket to the side.

“What’s *that?*” Maxine asked, suddenly at my side. Her trunk was right next to mine.

“My kitty coat,” I said, not wanting to explain further. Then, finding my swimsuit, towel, and my plastic case of hair products—including the conditioner my aunt had given to me—I slammed my trunk shut. “I just need to do a quick soak of my hair,” I told Sunny.

Sunny, who had hair that was a lot like mine, nodded with understanding. “You know where the showers are,” she said. “Be quick, please.”

I ran to the bathroom, soaked my braids in the shower, and quickly covered them in conditioner. I loved its sweet, coconut-y scent. The whole time, I could hear Sunny hurrying everyone up. “Time to start lining up!” she called out.

Gotta go, I told myself. I shot out of the bathroom and was about to step outside to join the others when I noticed that Maxine was still in the cabin. She was standing in the middle of the room, between the two sets of bunk beds, running her hands up and down the sleeves of my kitty coat. Which she was wearing.





Chapter 3

I began to shake a little. “What are you doing?” My voice came out in a squeak.

Maxine’s face got so red she looked sunburned. “Just trying it on.”

“Take it off!” I squeaked again. I had wanted to yell, but my throat felt dry and tight and I could hardly make a sound.

Maxine slowly and calmly slipped it off her shoulders. “I was just taking a look at it.”

“Looking isn’t the same as touching,” I said, managing to get my voice to rise just a little bit louder than a whisper that time. I snatched the coat from her hands.

At that moment, Sunny came in the room. “Why aren’t you girls lining up outside?”

I pointed at Maxine. “Ask her!”

“I just wanted to see what this fluffy thing was!” Maxine shrugged her shoulders like it was no big deal. “She called it a ‘kitty.’ I wanted to know why.”

Sunny just looked confused. “I’m not sure what you’re talking about. Just go put on your suit, Maxine! We need to go now!”

Maxine ducked her head and ran between us to the bathroom.

Sunny looked down at the fluffy white coat in my hands. “Is

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that yours? Why did you bring such a warm jacket to a summer camp? In Texas?" she shook her head. "Put it away, please."

It *had* been *away*, I thought to myself as I headed back to my trunk. Once I was there, I slipped the jacket to the bottom of my trunk as best as I could, piled everything else on top of it, and snapped it shut.



Once we were outside and in line, I slid behind Ashton. "What happened?" she asked me.

I almost didn't want to tell her. She had told me not to take the kitty coat. But after swallowing hard, I told her everything.

"You brought the coat?" Ashton blinked in disbelief.

But Gio, who was standing in front of Ashton and listening to our conversation, gasped. "How dare she?"

Kaydence, who was standing behind me, leaned in. "Wait, what happened?"

I repeated what I had told Ashton. When I was done, Ashton, Kaydence, and Gio all turned to glare at Maxine, who was standing at the back of the line.

"Guys!" I hissed. "Don't stare at her like that."

"She needs to know she can't go looking through other people's stuff," Kaydence said. And she continued to glare, even when Gio and Ashton had stopped.

"You can keep the coat in my trunk if you want," Ashton told me as we began to follow Sunny to the pool.

"Thanks," I said.

The swim test was to see how well we could all swim (or not) so that the counselors could decide what swimming