

Nah

“Can I PLEASE switch cabins?” I asked XJ, our cabin counselor. I stood there waiting eagerly for my answer while XJ took her time pondering. My hands fidgeted behind my back, grasping at the excess fabric of my jacket. Turning around, I saw my friends, sitting at a table alongside one another. Their chattering filled the dining room, with the other students eating with their friends. “Just make a decision already gosh,” I thought, still standing before her. My breath slowly loses its calm pace as my heart starts to beat. Forty seconds go by, and finally, XJ looks up at me. “Finally!” I exclaim in my head, crossing my fingers.

“I’ve thought about it, and nah,” she concludes, waving me off.

The word knocks me out of my trance.

“WHAT?” I mutter under my breath. My last hope for a cheerful and fulfilled trip seemed so distant. The possibility of getting switched was now nonexistent, and I grudgingly walked back to my seat. With only strangers surrounding me, I ate my lunch in silence.

“You know Taylor Swift’s new song?” and “Oh yeah, it’s fīyahhh!” were conversations I overheard. Something I couldn’t relate to was listening to her music, or even knowing her new songs. Listening to my new cabin mates and their conversations made me realize what I could be missing with my friends. A most likely lively chat with them about the new area we would call home for the next five days, the terrible food they just served us, and what we thought of the counselors. It could have been just as exciting as the activities we were planning to do.

As I gulped down the rest of my cold, mushy, and just depressing burger, we were instructed to leave the dining hall. The walk outside seemed painfully slow, almost as if time had stopped. Leaves fell from a nearby oak tree, crunching as students stepped on them. The cloudy atmosphere added to my loneliness. “When will this end?” I pondered, feeling the frown form on my cold face tinged with redness.

Outside the dining hall, I caught another glimpse of my friends, but I couldn’t even wave hello with all the thick groups of people surrounding us. Their laughs could even be heard as I walked down the steps leading towards the front of our cabin. Another reminder of why I wanted to switch cabins. They were the only people I felt comfortable with, not with Swifties who wouldn’t even hold up a conversation with me.

Walking into my dusty, grimy cabin, XJ’s voice rang in my head. Her seemingly harmless “Nah,” poking holes through what seemed like my soul. It felt as if my whole trip was ruined. Trying to make friends with the other girls didn’t help either, since I had nothing in common with the strangers I got paired with. Different music tastes already made me feel like an outcast. Even when I pleadingly asked XJ again, she returned a stern “No,”. The holes that her reply left in me felt like it also left holes in my trip, holes that were supposed to be filled with laughter from friends.

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