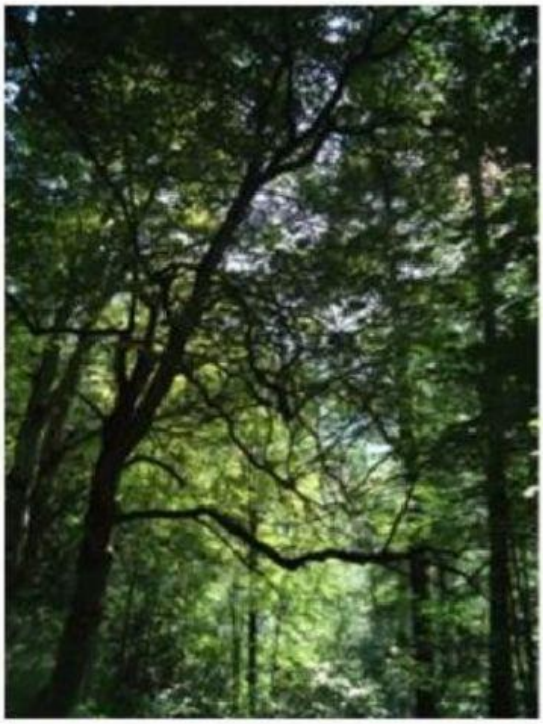
Happy Trails

by ReadWorks



The morning she left for Camp Kanawa, Maria awoke with a lump in her throat and an ache in her stomach. She had gone on plenty of sleepovers. She'd even spent a whole weekend at Aunt Jolie and Uncle Ed's. So why was she so nervous?

No breakfast today, she thought, imagining the ache turning into nausea and a horrible road trip after a full meal. Then the smell of French toast wafted upstairs. As usual, Maria's stomach grumbled as soon as the French toast-scented air hit her nostrils. *On the other hand, maybe a good breakfast is exactly what I need.*

She gave her arms and legs a good stretch and ambled downstairs.

"There's my big camper!" her mom said, squeezing Maria's shoulders with one arm the way she did when she wanted to give a hug, but was in too much of a rush for a full embrace. She walked briskly to the stove, placed two pieces of French toast on a plate and tapped a canister above them, powdered sugar snowing down.

"Just like you like it: super fluffy, slightly crispy..."

"...and lightly dusted," said Maria, already in position, armed with knife, fork, napkin and full

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glass of milk.

Maria poured a puddle of maple syrup beside the toast and topped each piece with a little mountain of whipped cream.

"Get started while it's hot. Your father's coming down in a minute. I told him to shave. Don't want the grizzly bear-I mean, grizzly beard-to send your new bunkmates running for the woods."

"Okay, okay," Maria's dad said with a sneaky smile. "Clean as a whistle. Just like you ordered."

"*Just* like I ordered?"

"The mustache stays. Admit it, you love it."

Maria's mom shrugged.

"I think it's hip," Maria said, dipping a bite in some syrup.

"Well, your old man *is* hip," her dad said, moving his head the way he did when he wanted to look like a cool surfer dude but looked more like an Egyptian robot."In fact, I was the most popular kid at my camp."

"For the record, it was science camp," Maria's mother reminded her, "and his rise to fame was thanks to what was known as The Great Explosion."

"Accident or genius? The world may never know," Maria and her dad said in unison, using their deepest, most mysterious voices. They slowly broke out of character and into laughter.

"In all seriousness, Maria, popularity is not important," her mother said, looking her straight in the eyes. "Finding the people who like you for you-that's what matters."

"Your mom speaks the truth, Sugar," said Maria's dad, wiping his thick mustache with a napkin. "Just be yourself. You'll have a blast."

* * * * *

Just be yourself. Just be yourself. Maria repeated the words like a mantra as she sat with her new cabin mates in a circle on the grass.

"Cool bracelet," said the skinny, freckled redhead sitting next to her.

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"Thanks. I made it in an embroidery class I took this winter."

"Whoa! That's impressive. Can you teach me how?"

"If you teach me how to do a braid just like the one in your hair. I've mastered the art of French toast eating, but *definitely* not French braiding."

A loud whistle hushed the girls' laughter and buzzing all around them. They looked up to see a beautiful older girl blowing into an acorn top between her thumbs. Her skin was tan and eyes were dark brown, like Maria's.

"Hello! I'm Audrey, one of your two cabin counselors."

"And I'm Gina, your other cabin counselor," said the pale girl with curly, brown hair and eyes that were icy blue in color, yet warm.

"And you ladies are the Dragonflies!" Audrey lifted her arms in the air as she announced it."Each cabin here at Camp Kanawa is named after a different insect."

"The Cockroach boys-age twelve and thirteen like you-think they've got the best mascot. I beg to differ. Dragonfly girls are as tough as dragons and graceful as...well, dragonflies."

"That sounded better when we rehearsed it," Gina said lightheartedly.

The ache in Maria's stomach had officially turned into butterflies-the excited kind.

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Vocabulary

camp

noun

definition: A camp is a place with things to do for children when they are not in school. Some camps have activities only during the day, and the children go home in the afternoon. There are other camps where the children can stay for a week or more, sleeping in tents or cabins.

I learned how to swim when I was at camp last summer.

counselor

noun

definition: A counselor is a person who watches over and helps children at a summer camp.

Spanish: consejero, asesor, encargado

matter

verb

definition: When something matters to you, it means that it is important to you. Having enough food to eat, having a nice place to live, and having friends are some things that matter to most people. When we say something doesn't matter, it means that it is not important.

Spanish: importar, tener importancia

forms: mattered, mattering, matters

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. At the beginning of the story, where is Maria about to go?

A. a sleepover

B. Camp Kanawa

C. Aunt Jolie and Uncle Ed's

D. school

2. How do Maria's feelings about camp change in the story?

A. At first Maria is nervous, but then she is excited.

B. At first Maria is excited, but then she is nervous.

C. At first Maria is excited, but then she is bored.

D. At first Maria is nervous, but then she is sad.

3. Maria is anxious and nervous about going to camp. What evidence from the story best supports this statement?

A. Maria decides to eat French toast for breakfast before going to camp.

B. Maria's parents give her advice about making friends at camp.

C. Maria and her mom joke with her dad about being hip and cool.

D. The morning she leaves for camp, Maria wakes up with a stomach ache.

4. Read the following sentences: "*Just be yourself. Just be yourself.* Maria repeated the words like a mantra as she sat with her new cabin mates in a circle on the grass."

Based on this information, what conclusion can you make?

A. Maria is confident that she will make friends.

B. Maria is not sure if she will like her cabin mates.

C. Maria is nervous about making friends.

D. Maria has already made some new friends.

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5. What is this story mostly about?

A. Maria goes to camp for the first time.

B. Maria really loves to eat French toast.

C. Maria discovers her love for dragonflies.

D. Maria jokes with her parents over breakfast.

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