

“THE CAMPING COMPLEX”

A Comedic One-Act by PJ Sallans

3 Female/ 2 Male

SYNOPSIS

A college professor and her husband go on a camping trip with their reluctant adult daughters and their daughter's peculiar new boyfriend.

CHARACTERS

DEENA (F) (40's+) - A college professor of literature

MIKE (M) (40's+) - Deena's husband, a camping enthusiast

CHARLOTTE (F) (20's+) - Deena's older daughter

MAXINE (F) (20's+) - Deena's younger daughter

TYLER (M) (20's+) - Charlotte's new boyfriend

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A woman, DEENA, her husband, MIKE, and their two adult children CHARLOTTE and MAXINE enter carrying lots of camping gear. It's clear they've been walking for a while.

MIKE: *(Singing)* Camp-town ladies, sing this song... *(MIKE pauses and looks behind him)*

CHARLOTTE & MAX: *(Dead-inside)* Doo dah... doo dah

MIKE: *(Singing)* Camptown race-track five miles long... *(He pauses again)*

MAXINE: *(Starts to sing)* Oh, doo dah da-

CHARLOTTE: *(To MAXINE)* Stop it! We're done singing, dad.

MIKE: You'll be done singing when I say you're done singing.

CHARLOTTE: Mom!

DEENA: Really, Mike. We've been singing for the last three miles.

MIKE: It's a morale booster! *(Singing)* Camp-town ladies, sing this song-

CHARLOTTE: Mom! This song sucks! And it's racist!

DEENA: She has a point, Mike.

MIKE: Fine. Then we'll just walk in silence. Is that what you want?

CHARLOTTE: I want my freedom! I'm a grown adult, and so's Max. But here we are hiking for miles in the middle of nowhere to go camping with our *parents*. You know I *hate* camping.

MIKE: Excuse me for wanting to have a little old-fashioned fun with my family.

DEENA: *(To MIKE)* You know Charlotte can only have fun if she's with her new man.

MAXINE: Should we check on him?

MIKE: How's it goin' back there, son? *(TYLER enters, straggling behind, carrying a ridiculous amount of cargo)*

TYLER: Good! Just fine! I love camping!

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MAXINE: I don't see why you had to bring him. You hardly know the guy. It's been what, a week?

CHARLOTTE: A *month* of pure bliss. We just get each other, you know? Our connection is so deep.

TYLER: Woah, the sun looks... really bright right now. You guys seeing this?

CHARLOTTE: Babe, no. Stop looking at it.

TYLER: Hey, how much farther are we thinking?

MIKE: Great question, Tyler. Just a few more miles and we'll be there. *(They all groan)*

CHARLOTTE: That's it! You guys can go on without us. Tyler and I are staying right here. *(She drops her luggage, Maxine follows suit)*

MAXINE: And me.

MIKE: Well, isn't this rich? It's not like dear old dad spent hours, days pouring over the perfect camping site where all the elements of nature align. Where the sunrise makes the trees come alive, and the wind tickles softly against your cheek at sunset. Let's just throw all of that away and set up camp here. Right here!

CHARLOTTE: Glad you agree, dad. *(They start unpacking)*

MIKE: *(Mumbling)* I'm gonna get the fire going.

DEENA: *(Checks her phone)* My reception is gone. Now I can't check on my student's assignments.

MAXINE: They're in college, mom. They don't need a babysitter. *(Takes out a cigarette)* These trees are stifling. I feel stifled.

MIKE: Maxine! Put that nasty thing away. You're gonna pollute nature.

MAXINE: But I need it. There's too many colors out here. *(MIKE grabs the cigarette)* Mom!

DEENA: Listen to your father.

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MAXINE: Why? He never listens to *me*.

MIKE: Go find us a log to sit on, or burn, or eat, or something. Charlotte, you go too.

CHARLOTTE: (*To TYLER*) You coming, babe?

TYLER: Nah, I’m gonna stay behind and see what’s up here.

CHARLOTTE: Don’t miss me too much. (*CHARLOTTE and MAXINE exit*)

TYLER: Hey, Mr. Henderson. You locked the car, right?

MIKE: The car? Yes. Of course I locked the car.

TYLER: Okay, just checking.

MIKE: I’d never walk out this whole way just to forget to lock the car.

TYLER: Right, right. Silly me. (*They shuffle around unpacking things in silence, after a pause*)

MIKE: You know, maybe I didn’t lock the car.

DEENA: Mike.

MIKE: There was so much going on, I could’ve just forgot.

DEENA: No one’s going to steal anything. We’re in the middle of nowhere.

MIKE: No, no, Deena. I’m not gonna be able to relax until I know for sure it’s locked.

DEENA: It’s a Prius! Just let them take it! (*MIKE exits*) That man. He never listens.

TYLER: Hey, Dr. Henderson?

DEENA: Please, “Deena” is fine. There’s no need to be so formal out here in backwoods, USA.

TYLER: Okay, Deena.

DEENA: Tell me, Tyler. Why are you interested in my daughter?

TYLER: Well, she’s the total package. She’s beautiful, vivacious, opinionated. I like a woman with an opinion, you know.

DEENA: All women have opinions. We just have to decide when it’s worth it to share them.

TYLER: Right. I didn’t mean to offend you-

DEENA: Why don’t you tell me about yourself? Seems only fair, seeing as how we’ll be sharing such tight quarters?

TYLER: Yeah, yeah. Uh, well. I work at a used carpet warehouse.

DEENA: Used carpet?

TYLER: It’s not as bad as it sounds. Usually the carpet’s real good, it just needs a little sprucing up before it’s okay to sell again. That’s where I come in.

DEENA: You clean used carpet for a living?

TYLER: It’s the best job I could get. There’s not a whole lot of options out there for a fella like me.

DEENA: You have a degree?

TYLER: No, I’ve got a record. Disorderly conduct.

DEENA: Oh. Well, that’s just a misdemeanor, right?

TYLER: Yeah, yeah. I was never convicted for the felony.

DEENA: (*Pauses*) Where did you and Charlotte meet, again?

TYLER: Funny story. So there I was at work, you know with the carpet, and there was this stain that was impossible to get out. I’m talking deep, right. Like, Lord knows what these people were doing on this carpet. I was walking to the grocery store to get some extra baking soda when BAM, I run right into her. Right outside your building on campus! Talk about my lucky day!

DEENA: Just incredible. So now you’ve got Charlotte *and* carpet.