



# G LASSES

Quinn was always a troublemaker at camp. Some counselors say that she didn't get enough attention at home, so she would act out more frequently here. So when another one of Quinn's crying fits came along one Friday afternoon, only an hour or so before everyone was ready to leave, people were just brushing her off.

I was sitting at the front desk, doing my administrative work when I heard a commotion coming from the back room. It was a first-year counselor – I never got her name, but she was always nice to me and good with the kids – holding Quinn's hand. They were walking to the nurse's office, which is right next to the front desk. The counselor said they were outside on the playground when Quinn started to feel dizzy, talking about her grandfather who died over 6 years ago. The little girl just stood there, hysterically crying, on the verge of hyperventilating. She pulled away her hand the counselor was holding to wipe her nose, rubbing the lenses of her pink unicorn sunglasses with her left hand.

At the sign of crying, everyone's heads turned and worry filled their eyes. But then they noticed the tears came from the eyes of little Quinn, the same eyes who cried 4 out of the 5 days that week. "What is it NOW, Quinn?," they would say. "Stop crying, Quinn," "Just. Calm. Down, Quinn." Usually the attention of adults even noticing her crying was enough to quiet the girl. But with the day being nearly over, even this was too much to attempt to quiet Quinn who often, literally, cried wolf.

MATTHEW DAVIS

Yet I knew this was more than just one of her usual attention-seeking stunts. I saw this before. I knew what she needed. And it was not being told to calm down.

I got out from behind the desk, squatted down to her eye level, and encouraged her to keep breathing. "Inhale deeply. Exhale slowly." I told her that I was there with her, there for her, telling her that whatever she saw, heard, or thought of, was okay. It will all be okay.

In the face of that little 7-year-old, I saw the face of a boy. Slightly chubby. Thin glasses. Older than I'd like to admit. I shook that thought out of my head and continued my conversation with Quinn.

I told her how much I liked her pink "shades," as she called them. She started to smile slightly, out of the left corner of her mouth. Within minutes, the nice counselor was taking a now calm, albeit red-faced Quinn back outside to the other kids.

I went back to my desk, adjusted my own glasses, and finished my work.