

RETURN..TO CAMP SUNSHINE

by Ken Bradbury



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LUCILLE: (*writing*) Dear Mother and Daddy. Well, you did it again. You sentenced me to a month a good old Camp Sunshine. I don't want to be too dramatic but have you ever heard of child abuse? Was it something I said? No offense, but this bible camp is a long, long way from heaven. Actually, it's closer to a detention. Gloria is still social director. I think they let her out of the home once a year to come drool over us. Uncle Ernie has had three brain surgeries since last summer and it's not helped him one bit. This morning he walked by a magnetic screen door and it stuck to his forehead.

GLORIA: Good morning, campers! My name is Gloria, your social director. That's G-L-O-R-I-A! Yesss! You know, just when I think I'll retire to a luxurious and profitable life as a Mary Kay saleslady, I think of you ... you, my little campers who have meant so much to me over the years! How many years have I been here, Lucille? None of your business, sweetheart. Shouldn't you be building a campfire or something? Say! Are we all ready to sing? Does everybody know the words to "Come on baby, light my fire!"?

LUCILLE: (*writing*) Dear Mommy and Daddy. Just when I thought this camp couldn't get any worse, I was wrong. I just saw Skip. He's the one who kept trying to put the moves on me at last year's camp. He's obviously still a Methodist. Please send money. They only open the Camp Canteen once a day and by the time I get there they're out of Gummy Bears. I need to bribe the nurse to hold some back for me. The camp food is really awful. Sister Lugasi is still the cook. Mama, she has wrinkles on her feet. I've seen them. She was wearing sandals last night for the "Fiesta Italiano" which was canned spaghetti

with green beans, and I saw her toes. They look like they have little canyons running through them.

UNCLE ERNIE: Atten-tion, campers! My name is Uncle Ernie and it remains my job to teach you God's love through pain and self-determination! As many of you know, I have suffered much in the service of the Lord having survived the Korean Conflict, several tours of Europe, and leading a Jr. High choir. It has come to my attention that several of you have gotten your wimpy little selves sadly out of shape over the winter so it will be my job to make you into the men that God intended you to be... especially you girls! From now on there will be no halter-tops used in the service of the Lord, and Spandex is the surest tool in the Devil's arsenal! Tomorrow morning ... 5 a.m. sharp, we begin the Wilderness Adventure based the Seven Plagues of Ancient Egypt. You think the Pharaoh had it bad, you ain't seen nothin', ladies.

LUCILLE: (*writing*) Dear Mommy and Daddy. Help!

SKIP: (*writing*) Dear Bubba. This is Skip. I'm back again. It's the 2 p.m. Take-a-nap-or-Write-a-Letter-Home time so I'm pretending to write to you. Uncle Ernie supervises our naptime and he snores so loud that it makes the younger campers cry. They think it's Armageddon. But hey, the chicks are even hotter this summer. I'm not kiddin'. Some of 'em are totally different shapes than last year. I never liked geometry but I'm gettin' into shapes.

GLORIA: It's me again, campers! G-L-O-R-I-A! Yesss! It's Mexicali Rancheros Night in the cafeteria and just a reminder to the girls in my cabin ... remember the oath we took last night to abstain from the taco sauce while sleeping together. I want to remind you that tonight in my cabin we'll have a special devotion upon the role of Avon skincare products in bringing peace and love to our brothers and sisters in Asia. And don't forget! Let's get to bed early tonight since Uncle Ernie's Wilderness Adventure begins bright and early tomorrow morning! Damnation Swamp is calling you!

LUCILLE: (*writing*) Dear Mommy and Daddy. They can't find Margo. I know where she is but I'm not telling. She's been in the kitchen ever since she came to camp. She's disguising

herself as a migrant worker and sneaks over to the boys' cabin after lights out. If Uncle Ernie finds her he has threatened to kill her ... with the love of God, of course. I have to go shower now. Gloria smeared some facial stuff all over me ... sort of a baptism by aloe vera.

SKIP: Dear Bubba. It's Skip again. You know Margo? The one I told her about last year? She got ex-communicated from the Holiness & Pestilence Church and went bad ... became a Presbyterian. I seen her in the lunch line. She was slipping Tijuana Hot Sauce into Gloria's taco.

UNCLE ERNIE: (*blowing his bugle, then*) Rise and shine you spindly-legged little Democrats! Up and at 'em you panty-waisted liberals! It's time for our Seven Plagues of Ancient Egypt Wilderness Adventure and I'll remind you again: only one of three Camp Sunshine campers pass this test of endurance in the face of everything Satan tries to throw at you! I warn you: there are those of you who will suffer, there are those who will give in ... who will wilt and cry and beg to come home to the comfort of your luxurious two-by-five foot pinewood bunkhouse cot, but the real men of God ... those who endure ... Yea, those unto whom great fortitude and bug spray hath been given ... Those men ... even those who aren't men ... will triumph! Can you spell Triumph? It's T-R-I- ... uh ... and a whole bunch of other letters!

SISTER LUGASI: (*writing*) Dear Sister. This is your sister, Sister. That doesn't sound quite right, does it? I mean this is Sister Lugasi who's also your sister, sister. Oh well, I'm back at this camp. I'm telling you there's nothing that drives me crazier than wall-to-wall Protestants. I mean, they're just everywhere you look. They keep me around to teach the kids diversity. They couldn't find any Australians, the Canadians all went to volleyball camp, so they picked me ... the token Catholic. I don't actually cook, I just open cans, but I don't think a Protestant would know a home cooked meal if it snuck up on him during mass. Gotta go ... It's chili night and this strange little kitchen assistant keeps stealing my hot sauce.

LUCILLE: (*writing*) Dear Mom and Dad. This could be it. I'm not kidding. I plan on being dead by tomorrow morning.



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