One Time At Band Camp

by Flameroyalty

Summary

It's Max's day for camp and Nikki has too much energy and no filter.

Notes

This is the result of 10 hours of sleep over 3 days. I'm sorry if this doesn't have enough Makki for your liking. I tried.

Max wasn’t looking forward to today. He had been dreading since he even got to camp. Now that there’s people whose opinions he actually cared about, he was ready to stay in his tent all day. At least, more than usual.

He didn’t sign up for this stupid camp. Hell his parents didn’t even choose it. They couldn’t be bothered to read the pamphlet his teacher gave to them. She said he had potential and they just signed a cheque. They didn’t tell him until the morning he was supposed to catch the bus. They blamed him that they were late.

He was woken up by the sound of a poorly played triangle. He assumed it was David trying to get into the spirit. He covered his head with his pillow and tries to drown out the sound. If he couldn’t even play a triangle, how the hell was David going handle the rest of the day?

Could he fake being sick? Nothing drastic enough to need to go to the hospital, just something to get out of activities. He removes the pillow and turns to Neil’s bed. Maybe he had a idea. Unfortunately for him, the bed was empty.
“Come on Max! It’s your day! Don’t you want to get a head start?” David shouts cheerfully from outside the tent.

“No!” Max yelled back.

“Max, get out of bed now,” Gwen makes herself heard.

Max groans and rolls his eyes. He rises and grabs his sweater. Neil had set up the machine to make coffee just the way Max likes it. It was one of his first projects.

He makes his way to the mess hall and sits between his friends. They both already had their breakfasts. He sipped his coffee.

“What’s your problem?” Nikki asks, stabbing her eggs.

“You do seem extra annoyed at the concept of being alive this morning,” Neil added.

“You’ll figure it out.” Max answers.

David comes over with another tray and sets it in front of Max. The last thing Max wanted to do right now was eat but it wasn’t worth the effort.

“I have a whole day of activities planned for today.” He smiled at the trio.

“Yeah, that’s your job moron.” Max replies.

“Well we’re going to have some arts and crafts, and then some sing-a-longs, song writing. Then the performance at the end of the day.” David says, clearly excited.


“It’s music camp day.”

“Whose day is it? I’m science. Nikki’s ‘adventure’; what every that means.” Neil shrugs. They turn to see Nikki recreating a crime scene with ketchup. “In fact the only one that’s left is-”

Neil turns to Max, who is slouched over. His head was on the table and his hood over his head.

“So what you’re saying is,” Nikki finally contributes, “Is that Max signed up, for band camp?”

“That’s right! And we’re going to make it the best band camp experience we possibly can. Right, Max?” David proclaims. Max began to bang his head against the table. “Oh don’t be like that. It’s going to be great.”

Gwen calls for David and he leaves the three alone. Max ceases his knocking and rests his head.

“Max, you’re in band camp?” Neil whispers.

“And I thought Neil was the nerd!” Nikki shouts.

“Nikki!” Neil glares at her.

“Sorry? It’s just funny. You know ‘this one time at band camp.’ It’s already a joke.”
“You’re not making him feel better!”

“It’s funny!”

“Shut up!” Max interrupts them.

“So what do you play Max?” Neil tries to lighten the mood, still glaring at Nikki.

“Not important.”

“Of course it’s important!” Nikki says, “Are you good? Or are you learning from scratch? I bet its drums. Drums would be so cool.” She begins to tap her cutlery on the table as if they were drumsticks.

“It’s not drums.” Max mumbles. He wishes it was.

“Maybe something smooth like a saxophone; or a trombone. Those are so fun.” Nikki continues.

“Nikki, stop.” Neil says through his teeth. The other campers were beginning to take notice. Nikki was standing on the table.

“Guitar, maybe! Electric guitar. As long as it isn’t something girly like a clarinet or a flute. That would suck. What other instruments are there? Oh! Violin! What even are those? Fancy strings? They don’t even sound good. They sound like the strings are screaming. At least the ones I hear around here.”

“What?” Neil turns his head to the side.

“Yeah! It’s always at really weird times but I swear I hear someone across the lake playing what I think is a violin. At least I hope it’s a violin, or there’s some really messed up stuff going on at the island.”

Nikki sits back down. Neil goes to look to his friend for explanation but Max was gone.

“What did I say?” Nikki asks, her mouth full of ketchup drenched eggs.

“Nikki, you’re an idiot.”

The rest of the day went fine for the other campers. None of them really seemed to care about today’s camp, or that it was Max’s. In fact, they had been pretty supportive. Preston obviously asked Max if he knew any Broadway tracks. Nerris made a speech about how important bards were and how he should be proud of his musical ability. Nurf even came up to Max and admitted that he played the flute.

Neil tried to get Nikki and Max to sort out what had happened at breakfast. Nikki still didn’t see what she did wrong and Max was straight up ignoring her. Neil hated it but he was actually asking David for help. David made them do activities together but nothing was getting done.

It wasn’t long until the sun was beginning to set and Gwen was ushering all the campers to the stage. Preston gladly helped David and Max set up. Max was as silent as possible through the whole preparation session. He did not want to do this.

“This is going to be brilliant! What are you playing Max? Bach? Beethoven?” Preston was
much more excited about this then Max was.

“It’s a surprise. It was Max’s idea!” David says excitedly.

“No it wasn’t.” Max says in a monotone voice.

“Okay, it was my idea but Max agreed!” David tried to save it.

Once the stage was set, Max took his place in the middle of it. He dragged along his case with him. It had been a pain hiding it. Thanks to Nikki’s comment, he realized he clearly hadn’t done a well enough job keeping his practicing a secret. Once today was over he was shoving the damn thing back under his bed and not taking it out again until it was time to go home.

He prepares himself and begins to play. The crowd of campers go silent as the sound of the strings echoes. A few notes in, Preston pulls back the curtain to reveal Max standing center stage, violin on his shoulder. His eyes were closed as he played. He almost looked happy. He looked at peace, for a moment.

David was seated on a stool beside the boy. As if planned, the campers realized what was being played, mere seconds before David joined in. He pulled out his guitar and began to slowly and sweetly sing along.

“There’s a place I know, that’s tucked away,  
a place where you and I can stay.  
Where we can go to laugh and play,  
and have adventures every day.

I know it sounds hard to believe,  
But guys and gals it’s true.  

Camp Campbell is the place for me and you.”

It was a version that Max and David had planned near the start of the summer. It was much slower then David’s original version; which is what made it tolerable. Max hated having to listen to the damn thing over and over but he figured he could let David have this one thing.

Once David finished the lyrics, he drifted off and let Max take full control. Max continues to play an extended version of the first verse and drifts off himself. He doesn’t bow. Preston simply closes the curtains to signify the completion of the song. Max turns and returns his instrument to it’s case.

“That was beautiful.” Preston manages to stay through tears.

“Thank you Preston.” David says.

“Whatever.” Max mumbles. He picks up his case and walks off the stage. He just wanted to go to his tent and go to bed. Of course, that’s not what he gets. What he does get, is his friends waiting for him at the bottom of the stage stairs.

“Max, that was amazing.” Neil says, surprised.

“Yeah.” Max answers with zero enthusiasm. He goes to walk around them.

“No Max.” Nikki stops him, “That was really, really good. I don’t know a lot about music
but I know that was crazy good. You guys like, completely changed the song? How did you even do that?"

“Practice.” He stares at her. Realization dawns on her.

“Ohhhh, that was you I heard on the lake. That makes a lot more sense. No wonder you were mad at me. I’m sorry Max. I guess I was being kind of an assho-”

“Alright campers! Time to go listen to David’s other stupid songs at the fire. Let’s go.” Gwen shouts in the distance.

“Yes, time for smores. I’ll catch you guys over there!” Nikki exclaims and bolts in the direction of the fire pit.

“She really didn’t get-” Neil starts.

“It’s fine.” Max cuts him off, “It’s whatever. I’m going to the tent to drop this off.”

“I’ll meet you at the fire?”

“Sure.”

Max makes his way back to the tent. He places the case so it’s leaning against the base of his bed. He pulls his hood over his head and goes to join his friends at the fire.

End Notes

-edit-

Since I don't have a violin version of the theme song, I listened to Daniel Jang's violin cover of 7 Years while writing the stage scene. It made me cry. Granted, I was also very tired.

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