



Never

legendary

# ~Chapter 1~

## Arrival

*The line was so long. Too long.*

Natalie and Baylanna were bouncing around me, laughing and telling stories. They were one year younger than me, but that really didn't matter because we were still friends. I clutched my journal closer to my chest. I was almost done writing the first book of the series.

"Are you excited, Lain?" Natalie waved her hand in front of my face.

I looked down at her. "Of course I am! This is my favorite place in the world!"

It was a place of joy, peace, religion, hope, harmony, family, and friendship. Legendary Lodge was a summer camp in Montana, and every year my cousin Natalie and I came for a week. I loved it.

I glanced down at my bulky guitar case, thinking of when Jackie, one of the counselors from last year, taught me how to *really* play guitar. I wondered if she was here this year. I couldn't wait for the talent show this year, although the camp called it "skit night."

I glanced up at the line and my eyes widened. We were next! Butterflies filled my stomach. As we boarded the boat, I looked down at the water of Seeley Lake. I couldn't believe I was really here again.

When we got across, my mom, dad, aunt, and uncle helped us all with our luggage and checked us into the camp. We headed for the cabin not long after. Last year, we were in Goat's Nest cabin, the smallest one. This year we were in Coyote, the second largest.

When we entered, Baylanna and Natalie squealed and headed for the first closed-off room with two sets of bunk beds.

"Hey, yeah! Our own room!" I punched one of my fists into the air in triumph.

That's when our family hugged us and left, after taking about a million and one pictures of the three of us.

"So, Lain," Natalie flopped down on my bunk as if she owned the thing. I gave her a funny look. "Excited for skit night, eh?"

I laughed at the ridiculous accent she used. It was just weird because she was using a British accent.





Grabbing the extra journal from my bag, I said over my shoulder, "you know, I'm going to write my own song again this year, Nat."

She and Bae laughed as I took out my guitar and grinned. Then I sat on the floor, took a deep breath, and started to write.

## ~Chapter 2~

### The Girl With My Name

*"Wake up."* A voice said softly above me.

I slowly peeled my eyes open. The head of Aibra, one of the female counselors, hovered over me.

"Time for your morning treatment." She said quietly to me, careful not to wake Natalie and Baylanna.

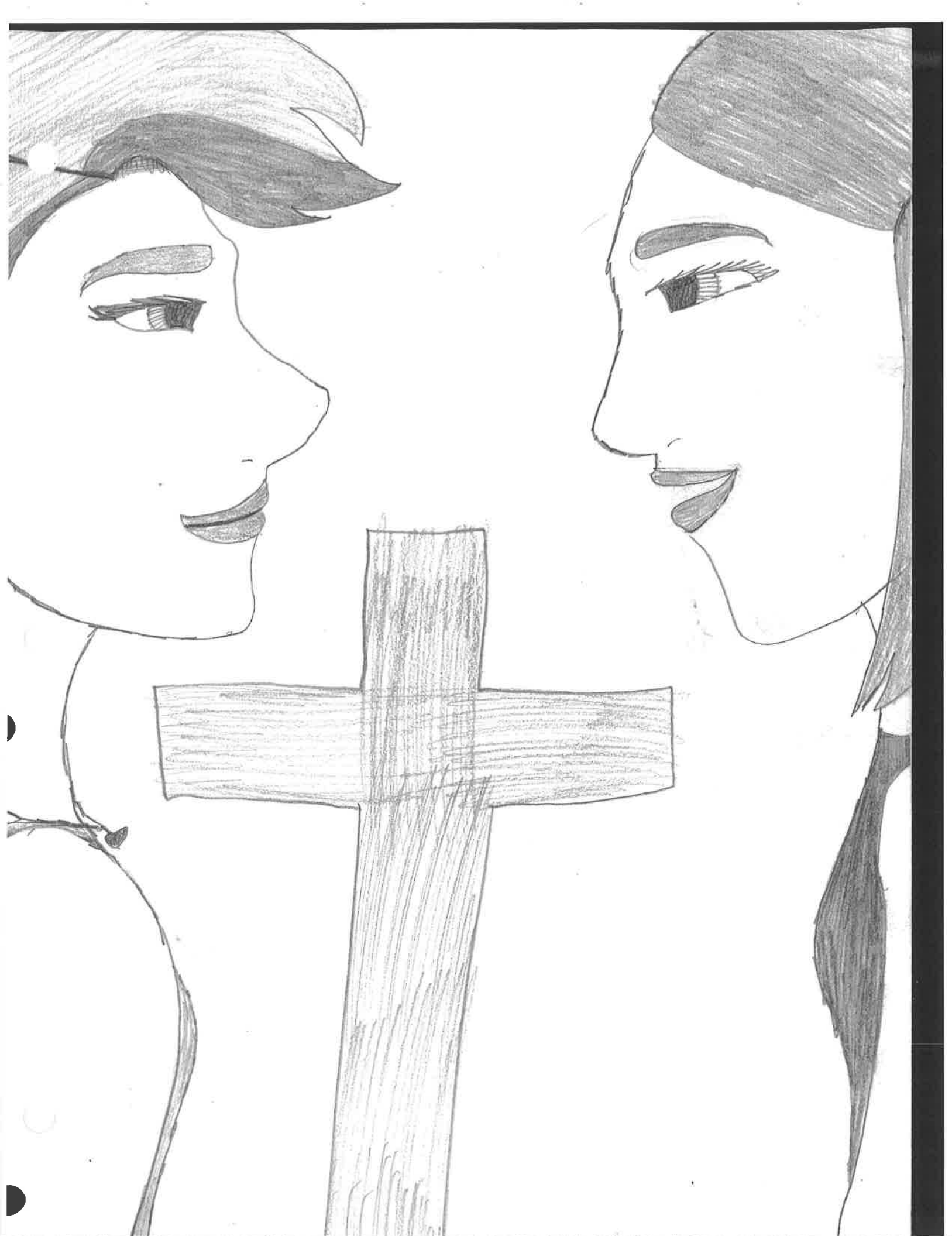
I groaned tiredly, sitting up and slipping a robe on. My flip-flops echoed in the silence of the cabin as I followed her out the door. We headed up to Eagle's Nest, the big house of the camp, in silence. Sometimes I really hated my medical issue. Cystic Fibrosis. It was a chronic illness and affected my respiratory system, so I had to do treatments that I despised, because it made me different from normal kids, even if they couldn't see the difference.

When we got there, she left the room to let me do the treatment privately, which I appreciated, and didn't at the same time. Even over the noise it made, I could hear the counselors over my treatment in the other room talking in hushed tones. I wondered what my small group was doing today.

Breakfast was quick and loud, as usual, just as I remembered it. After, when more than a hundred girls filed onto the lawn of Eagle's Nest, it was crowded. When they announced the activities, and which small groups would be doing each, I looked over and wiggled my eyebrows at my cousin. Natalie stuck out her tongue at me. Both our groups would be participating in canoeing and hiking today. We split into two groups and Natalie and I ended up on the same side; canoeing. I bumped her with my hip. We would definitely be letting our competitive natures take hold of us today. She shoved my arm.

"All right!" Breanna, another counselor hollered over the chattering girls. "Head down to the canoe lake!"

I pushed Natalie and yelled, "Race 'ya!" then took off with her on my heels. I was giggling so hard that I didn't see the loose brick in the path. I slipped on it,



letting out a short yelp, and my hand shot out, grabbing the shoulder of a random girl to steady myself.

"Hey!" she yelled. I quickly removed my hand and apologized.

"I'm so sorry... uh..." I stuttered, not knowing her name.

"Alaina," she finished with attitude.

My eyes almost bugged out of my head. "Your name is Alaina? How do you spell it?"

"A-L-A-I-N-A." she answered.

"Oh, my God. We have the same name!" I was grinning now, and so was she, the episode with me tripping earlier, forgotten.

"I've never met anyone with my name before!" she said.

"Me either!" I laughed.

We chattered until Natalie butted in. She placed her hands on her hips and flicked her brown hair out of her tan face and narrowed her chocolate brown eyes at us.

"I hate to break up this... *touching*, moment, but we have to get to the lake." I could see the hurt beneath her snotty facade.

So, we headed to the lake.

"Everyone get a partner." Breanna said.

Me and the other Alaina teamed up instantly, leaving Natalie scrambling. She stamped her foot, frustrated. I started giggling and she glared at me, inching her way toward a girl with thick black hair braded into two French braids and blue eyes. Maria, I remembered.

No sooner than we got onto the water, Maria and Natalie were racing me and Alaina to the first stop. I glanced behind me, for a split second, to find Alaina smiling, her hazel eyes bright and her short, light brown hair whipping in the light, warm breeze. We won the first race, and when we stopped, Breanna pulled out a paper.

"It's a reflection written by a famous saint." She said.

When she started reading it, something inside me changed. Warmth and peace spread through me. My heart grew wings. In that moment, I knew that He was there. Watching me. My heart felt full, my soul had never been happier. It was the feeling of love.

"Alright!" Breanna said, breaking the spell. "Let's head to the next stop!"

I looked at Natalie, and she grinned competitively, but when she saw my face, her grin melted into a look that said, "You *will* tell me later.

And I did. After the hike, when we were sitting in the cabin, I spilled everything.

And I knew for certain now, that I had felt the presence of God.

## ~Chapter 3~

### Capture the Flag

*It was a long hike up the mountain the next day.*

When we got to the top, we had mass, and then headed back down, which was a lot shorter. I met a new girl named Meghan, who was very friendly. She, Natalie, Baylanna, Alaina, and I were practically inseparable now.

So, we were all sitting in Coyote cabin, talking and exchanging stories from home, me and Natalie currently having a Diva episode with each other, making the others laugh, when the announcement came.

"Everyone to the front of Eagle's nest! It's time for Capture the Flag!"

I squealed, and I wasn't alone. When we got there, more than a hundred girls swarmed, all talking over one another, so when the counselors came out with face paint, it was an all-out scream fest. We split into two teams, yellow and green, and since we were all lucky, we all ended up on the same team. Each team split into their territories, and when the bell rang, all heck broke loose.

There were green and yellow faces everywhere, so when I made a run for it, nobody caught me because of the utter chaos. I searched the boat house first; nothing. That's when a freaking *yellow* burst onto the scene.

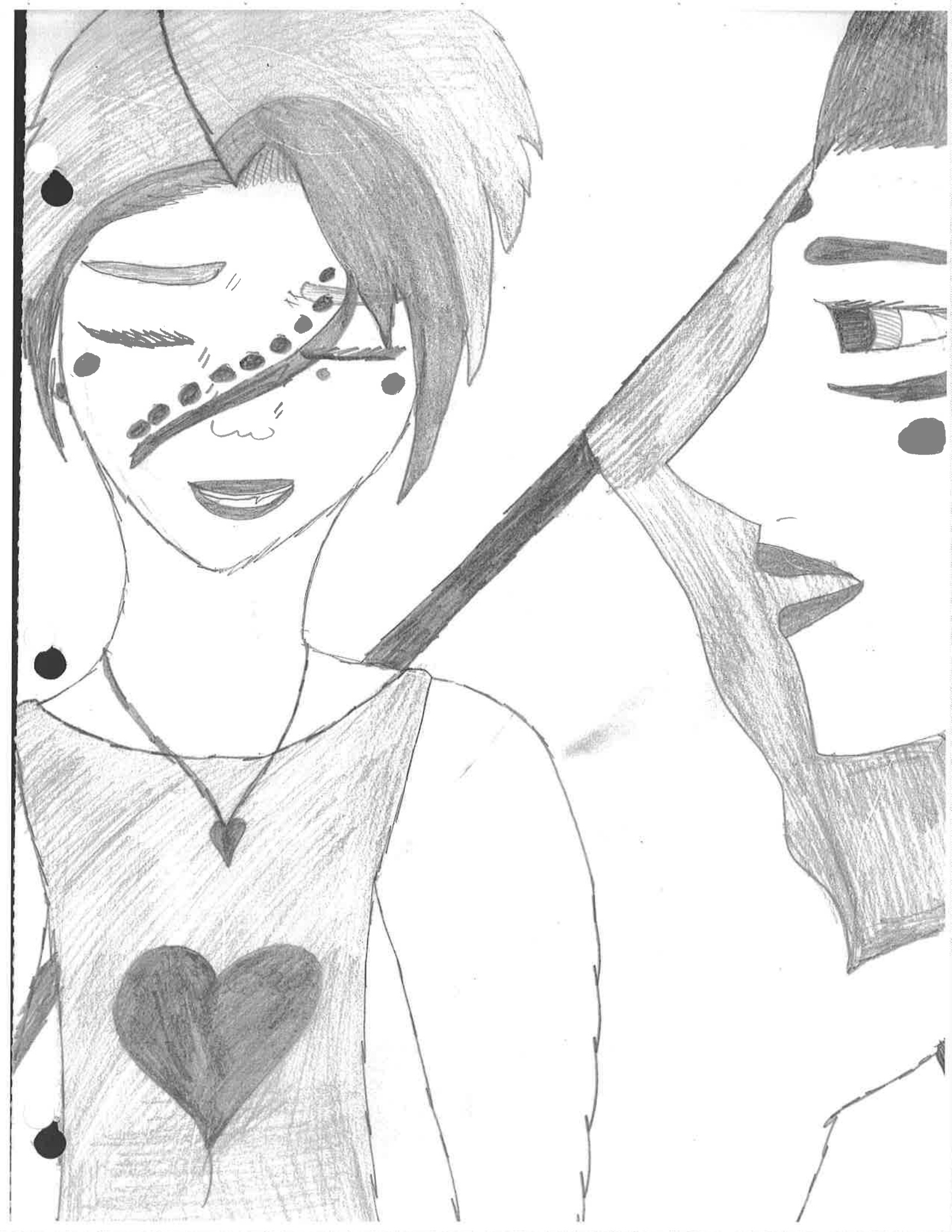
*Oh, crap...* I thought. Being a green, this was *Not. Good.*

When she spotted me, I shrieked and took off as fast as I could toward my territory. I made it, and not a second too soon. She stumbled over the border for a split second, before quickly backing up quickly onto her side. She snarled, following my every move. Yep. So much for *that* plan. That's when hollers and cheers erupted from the yellow side. I looked up just in time to see one of the yellow counselors cross the border with *our* blue flag. My green sisters shrieked and cursed with fury. Crap. This was not good.

The teams switched territories, and the six of us stood with Aibra, knowing she would know what to do. When the chaos erupted again, I knew better than to go for the grab. So, Alaina, Natalie and I headed up the side of the hill overlooking the yellow jail. None of the guards were paying attention. So, I quietly slid down the side of the hill so I'd be safely hidden when I decided to make a run for it.

"Alaina! Are you crazy?" Alaina whisper hissed to me.

"I know what I'm doing." I whispered back, even though I didn't really.





I waited until the guards were facing away from me and prayed, "Oh, God, please let this work..." and then I ran. The guards only noticed me when they realized that all their green prisoners were running up the hill, free. I cackled and passed them, sticking out my tongue as I went.

"Get her!" one of the yellows shrieked, but it was already too late; I was over the border.

I looked around and noticed there were almost no greens in sight. Plenty of yellows... but no greens. There were a few greens stalking along the border looking intimidating, as if daring the yellows to cross. I looked up at Eagle's nest and saw two figures streak across the lawn, faces coated in green. One with short, light brown hair and the other with dark. The way the two of them moved seemed so familiar... I gasped. It was Alaina and Natalie! Four others followed close behind them, all green; Maria, Baylanna, Meghan, and Aibra.

I watched for an opening. I had to get to them. When there were no other yellows around, I made a beeline straight for where my friends had disappeared behind Moose Cabin. When I came around the corner, Natalie stumbled back, as if she was trying to run, and I held up my hands, chuckling. Relief flooded her face. Aibra had the Yellow's blood-red flag in her hands, and I looked to see if the coast was clear. When it was, we all ran, surrounding Aibra, and other greens who had made it across came out of hiding to join us. But we were slowly picked off, one by one.

When Aibra stumbled and dropped the flag, my heart stopped. She was dragged away by Yellows, but Natalie picked up the flag, running like heck. My heart swelled. That was my awesome little cousin. And then I was attacked by Yellows. But I never took my eyes from Natalie, as they began to drag me away. When she crossed the border, our whole team exploded into cheers.

It may have been a tie, but it sure as heck felt like a victory.

## ~Chapter 4~

### Skit Night

*After talking with two of the counselors, Aibra and Ashley, I had a brilliant piece of music composed for Skit Night.*

My dress was sleeveless and deep blue, surprisingly fitting me. When Natalie, Alaina, and the others saw me in it, they voiced their approval. When we were setting up and practicing, I got so antsy that I had to get up and do a few

jumping jacks. When the time finally came, Alaina was the one to help me do the final touches on my dress and hair and makeup.

"Wish me luck." I whispered.

She grasped my shoulders and grinned. "You don't need it."

That's when the girls and counselors started to trickle in. I gripped my guitar and sat down in the front row, Natalie and the others joined me shortly after. I was shaking when the show began. When they called me up, it took me a moment to register what they'd said.

"You've got this." Natalie gave me a small shove.

I got to my feet and Ashley joined me on the drums. I sat the lyrics in front of me on the stand, microphone to my face, guitar in my lap, and started to strum. I barely heard the drumming, as I lost myself in the music I created, and lyrics started pouring out of my mouth.

*When I see,  
Inside of me,  
My heart beats,  
My eyes sing...*

That's when the clapping started. I glanced up for a second to see hands waving in the air, girls and counselors clapping to the beat. Tears filled my eyes. I focused in on the music once more. I couldn't cry. Not yet.

Never had I been filled with such joy. I'd told the audience that I'd written this, and now they were cheering for me.

As soon as I strummed the last chord, a thunderous applause filled the huge room. Whistles and cheers filled my ears. That's when the tears spilled over.

As I headed back to my seat, girls and counselors alike swarmed me. Everyone hugged me, and several girls and counselors had tears streaming down their faces.

Aibra, Natalie, and Alaina alike wore matching expressions of shock. Then, out of nowhere, a little girl came up to me and held out a beautiful gold bracelet. She dropped it into my palm.

"Your amazing." She said, and ran off without any other explanation.

I stared down at the little gold thing, and made a promise to myself. No matter how old I got, I would wear that bracelet to every concert I ever did.

No matter what.



## ~Chapter 5~

# Kitchen Robbers

*At free time that day, when I pulled out my guitar, almost every girl in sight swarmed me.*

So, *this* was what it was like to be famous. But the real highlight of the day was that night. I'd come prepared with black clothes and all, but it was still a surprise when I came into the cabin that night after my evening treatment to be assaulted by girls in black with dark green face paint on.

I started giggling uncontrollably and ran into my room to get changed. Oh, yeah. I knew what *we* were doing tonight! They slathered me in face paint, and we headed for the kitchen. I wondered if it was going to be cupcakes again this year, or some other sweet treat.

It wasn't really hard getting there. We were caught a few times, which was hilarious. But we just kept right on going after the suspecting counselors left. At one point, we fell to the ground and pretended to be bears.

Yep. We were so mature.

So, when we finally did get back to the cabin with the rich, chocolate brownies, it was all worth it. They melted in our mouths, still warm and fresh from the oven.

Natalie and Alaina were giggling as were the other girls. I mean, last year we did this in the middle of a rainstorm. I couldn't help but notice how much stealthier Goat's Nest had been last year when they'd robbed the kitchen. We weren't caught even once. It was a very sad comparison.

Now, I knew for a fact, that every cabin robbed the kitchen at least once during the week. That thought made me giggle. I wondered if next year, when I was in the junior high week, we would rob the kitchen. Probably not. They probably thought we were "too old" to rob the kitchen any more.

*Pfft.* Yeah right.

As you can imagine, we were all hyped up after that, so it was kind of hard to get us into bed by curfew. The counselors did it though. Don't ask me how. I honestly had no idea. Aibra sang to us.

I kept on knocking on Natalie's bunk, because she was right above me.

"Ugh, stop it!" she whispered at me. I giggled, high on sugar. Yeah, I didn't think I was going to sleep for a while. I pretended to snore and Natalie leaned





over the side of her bunk to try and smack at me. I dodged the blows. I was surprised she didn't fall off her bunk.

"Go to sleep, Alaina." She told me, rolling back onto her bunk.

Grinning, I rolled over. Even with the sugar, I didn't realize how tired I was until my head hit the pillow. I was asleep in seconds.

## ~Chapter 6~

### We are PIRATES

*The next day was a blast.*

At the end of the day, we were dressed in swim suits, slathered in blue and red paint. Banners were set up, and it was probably the biggest water balloon fight you'd ever see. The sides were across a small lake channel.

Here was how you got points; hit a random person on the opposite team with a balloon, you got one point; hitting a counselor on the other team was three points; hit the other team's larger-than-life banner and you got ten points, and knock over the other team's banner and you won the game.

Me, Natalie, and Alaina were on the red team. All three of us were laughing hysterically as we launched balloons at the other team.

"I love this place!" Alaina said.

"Same!" I giggled like an idiot.

I launched a balloon as hard as I could from a sling shot at the blue team's banner and it hit it smack in the center. Our team roared with victory. It was the first balloon to hit the banner. I froze.

How?... I couldn't believe I just did that. Natalie smacked me on the back.

"Ow!" I yelped, jumping away from her.

She and Alaina snickered. I stuck out my tongue at them and rolled my eyes. They may have been my friends, but they could be so immature. But, then again, so could I.

Something wet exploded against my shoulder and I shrieked in terror, whipping around to see who, on the other team, had caught me by surprise and hit me. Meghan was bent over at the waist, laughing. Oh... so not funny.

I launched one at her and it hit her square in the face when she stood back up. Natalie, Alaina, and I had a good laugh about that.

"I'm gonna hate it when we have to leave." Natalie said.

"Yeah," I agreed. "It's gonna be even worse than last year, and that's really saying something." Last year was hard to leave this place, the memories I'd made



on my first year here. Now, it was going to be even harder, leaving behind the girl with my name. Turned out, the Blue's won, but that really didn't matter. We had fun. Yep. This place was my favorite place in the world. A place of legend. Legendary Lodge.

## ~Chapter 7~

### Legends

*Turned out, Legendary Lodge actually had legends!*

As we gathered around the bonfire the following night, the counselors started up with the legends about this place. The first one was about a girl who disappeared from here years ago and her grave stone. The grave was said to be cursed. At one point, a diver had found it at the bottom of Seeley Lake, and the next day, it appeared on his doorstep. That story was pretty creepy. The next one was about a mass kidnapping and only one of the kids came back several years later. Turns out, he was a counselor who was not present at that point. The last was about the "monster of Seeley Lake." That one had me and Natalie rolling our eyes. The campfire was fun. We all had glow sticks! I turned to Alaina.

"I'm going to miss you when I go home to Wyoming." I said to her quietly. She smiled at me. "Me too, Alaina."

That was funny. Two Alaina's becoming friends. I mean, what are the odds? Not very high, I'll tell you that. There are several Elenas out in the world, but not many Alainas. She slipped something into my hand.

"Write to me sometime." She said.

"I will." I promised.

I watched the flames of the campfire and thought of a friend I'd met the year before at this place. Alaina reminded me of her. Oh, how I wished Laria was here. Then, the circle of friends would've been complete.

This was the one time I allowed myself to think of last year. Laria wasn't the only close friend I'd made the year before; Kia, Adrea, and Sara were girls I wished were here this year as well. Now that I thought about it, Meghan was here last year. It was pretty obvious that Baylanna and Natalie were here as well. But Alaina wasn't. Laria and I still kept in touch through letters, but it wasn't often that she had the money to write to me, which was why she wasn't here this year; she couldn't afford it.

I was glad I'd met the girls that I had this year though. My gold bracelet hung at my wrist and I traced it with my finger.



This year was quite possible one of the best I'd ever have. I mean, it would be hard to beat this. And long after, maybe this place would have a legend about the girl who wrote her own song, and not only that, her cousin who won capture the flag, and her friend with the same name as her. Truth was, this place wasn't the only legendary thing. We were too.

We are legendary.

## ~Chapter 8~

### Saying Good-Bye

*The good-byes that year were hard and I had suspected as much.*

Leaving Alaina and Meghan behind were so much harder. Baylanna had gone home the night of Capture the Flag. I really missed all of them.

I still miss them now. Alaina's optimism, Meghan's sense of humor, Baylanna's sarcasm, Natalie's strength, everything. So now, I sit down with a pen and paper, take a deep breath, and write the first words:

"Dear Alaina..."





Natalie



Alaina



Alaina