

THE TORN HEART*

One Tuesday morning, when the alarm clock rang, David did not get out of his bunk. Ten minutes later, his counselor opened the door to his cabin. "Come on," he said. "You'll be late for breakfast again."

"But Elliott, I'm tired," David said.

"Don't be such a baby", Elliott said impatiently. "You're always late. Just get up and get ready. Everyone else is already dressed. Kyle and Roger, David's cabin-mates, were just about to leave to head to the dining hall. "Wait up for David," Elliott called to them. "We're hungry. Why do we have to wait for that loser?" they said.

Kyle and Roger waited for David, but once Elliott was out of sight, they told David he'd have to walk a few steps behind them. "We don't want anyone to think we're actually your friend, okay?" Once inside, David got his tray and was walking over to his table when he tripped over his shoelaces he had forgotten to tie in the rush. He regained his balance, but his milk went flying up into the air and landed in a puddle on the floor. "Look, it's like a circus act," a kid yelled out and everyone at his table started to laugh and point at David. "I wonder if he does tricks with balls like those trained seals?" someone else asked.

David liked to play sports, but he hated camp because he was the smallest of all the boys. That day, because it had started to rain, they were supposed to play basketball indoors, which was David's very worst sport of all. The counselor asked the players to divide themselves into two teams, the Lions and the Tigers. Within a few minutes there were ten boys on each team, with only David and another kid left.

The captain of the Lions team said, "We don't want David – he's no good."

"He's no Tiger. He's more like a scaredy-cat." Said the captain of the Tigers. All the other boys laughed.

That night after dinner, David volunteered to help the kitchen staff clean up. Two girls saw him sweeping and started teasing him. "Hey, Cinderella, when you're done can you come clean our cabins?"

QUESTIONS:

1. Identify all the mean and teasing comments made about or to David. Who made them?
2. How do you think David should have responded to the various people?
3. If you were David, what would you do now?

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