



OUTDOOR ED

INVASION

EVAN JACOBS

Walden Lane

Where the mountains meet the sea ... Where the city blends into the wilderness ... This is Walden Lane. Hike in the sage-green hills, or surf in the cool Pacific—all in the same day. Is Walden Lane perfect? No. But it is home.

Meet the Characters

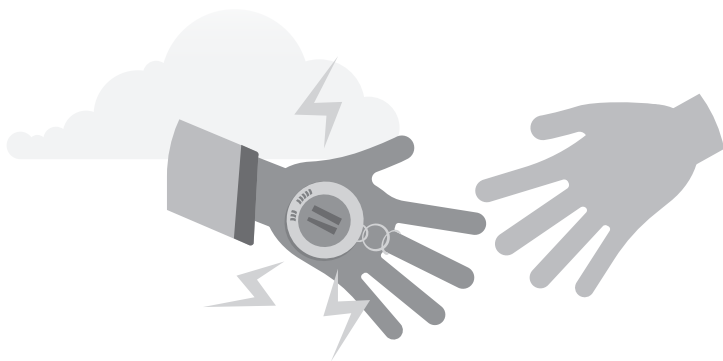


Marlon Moore loves gaming. When he's not in school or riding his bike, he's online. But 14-year-old Marlon is also a loyal friend and a great little brother. He would tell you his best friend is Steve McCain. But his dad is his true BFF.

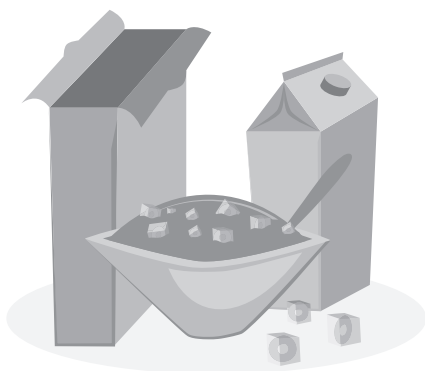


Ashley Moore is an overachiever. She's good at almost everything she tries. Is she a perfectionist? Maybe. But Ashley is 16 and likes to have fun too. And her family doesn't let her accomplishments go to her head.

Pranks



Marlon's #1 prank rule: Don't dish it out
if you can't take it.



Doug pranked his little brother by serving him
a bowl of frozen cereal.



Fun Facts



Clark once replaced Marlon's Cheetos with baby carrots. Bam!



Steve and Marlon love to prank Ashley by scaring her with clown masks.





Chapter 1

Arrow Pines

Look how small everything is,” Marlon said. He stared out a window. Marlon’s class was on a bus. It drove up a large mountain. “I should take a picture.”

The eighth-grade class was going to outdoor education. It was a science camp. They would be gone for five days. Students still had to study. But it wouldn’t be like typical school. The work would be about nature.

Marlon and Steve sat together. Doug and Clark sat behind them. The four boys were good friends.

Outdoor ed was at Arrow Pines Campground. It was in the mountains. Arrow Pines was about two hours from Walden Lane. There were shops in town. Most people lived nearby.

The town was near Dry Oak. Steve and his dad liked to camp there. Those two liked to rough it. They would fish. No catch, no dinner. It was that simple.

Marlon and his dad had gone to Dry Oak too. They weren't big campers, though.

Marlon didn't like roughing it. Who could live without the internet? But he did like hanging out with his best friend. Steve was a good guy. He was a great gamer. And he thought Marlon was hilarious.

Many students had been to Arrow Pines before. The elementary school had the same program. Outdoor ed was for sixth graders. Students had loved it. No parents for an entire week. Epic!

Marlon enjoyed being away from home. He also liked that outdoor ed was comfortable. Students slept in cabins. Cabins were heated. There were three meals a day. Portions were big. He was excited to be on his own. His friends were important to him.

“How will you take a picture?” Clark asked. He looked at the land below them.

“He brought his phone,” Steve said.

“Shhh!” Marlon said. “Do you want Mr. Troller to hear?”

All the boys looked at the teacher. He sat in the front seat. Mr. Troller had a science book open. He made notes on it.

Mrs. Fry sat next to him. She held open a science book too. Sometimes the two teachers would chat. Then they would go back to their books.

The science teachers were in charge. Outdoor ed was their responsibility. There would also be cabin leaders. Other school staff had come to help.

“Your phone will be taken away,” Clark said. “I hope Mr. Troller doesn’t find out about it.”

“He won’t,” Marlon said. He pointed at Steve. “As long as bigmouth keeps quiet.”

Everyone dressed for the cold. Marlon even wore a beanie. Steve wore a flannel shirt. Clark wore a thermal T-shirt. Doug wore a beanie too. Every student had a heavy jacket.

Arrow Pines could get cold at night. Marlon had learned about the cold the hard way.

Marlon eyed his phone. Four signal bars. Excellent. Time to watch a video. Lately he'd been into prank videos. Kids pranking their parents. Or their teachers.

He brought up a video. The volume was set low. Then he took out an apple. "Any of you guys hungry?" He held out the fruit.

"Why do you have that?" Doug asked.

"My mom made me bring it," Marlon said. "I didn't eat breakfast. I was too excited for this trip." But he wasn't hungry. An apple didn't sound good. It was too healthy. He put it back into his pocket.

Marlon checked the live video feed. An interesting story popped up. "No way!" he said loudly.

“What?” Steve asked.

“Yeah,” Doug said. “Keep it down.”

The boys laughed. Marlon didn’t laugh. He looked serious.

“There is a nearby prison. Two bank robbers escaped,” Marlon said. “The jail is close to Arrow Pines. It’s in Delton.”

“So?” Steve asked.

“It literally just happened,” Marlon said. He kept watching the news. “They say two men escaped. They dug a tunnel.”

“No way!” Steve said.

“Way,” Marlon said. “The police don’t think they went far.”

“I wonder,” Doug said. “Will this mess up outdoor ed?”

“Why?” Clark asked.

“Because there are criminals on the loose!” Doug couldn’t believe it. Was he

the only one who thought this was scary?
“Delton is close to Arrow Pines. Marlon just said it. It’s even closer than Dry Oak.”

“Do you realize how big Arrow Pines is?” Clark asked. “There’s no way. Those two guys won’t come to camp.”

“Yeah,” Marlon said. “This town is in the middle of nowhere. That’s why it’s great for outdoor ed. We’ll be safe. That’s why the school chose this camp. My dad told me.”

They would arrive soon. Students buzzed with excitement.

A week away from home.

No parents.

No brothers or sisters.

This would be the best time ever!



Chapter 2

Spinach

Marlon and Steve cracked up. Their cabin leader was funny. His name was Spinach. Marlon elbowed Steve. Steve did it back.

“Okay. Put your bags on your bunk. Bring a heavy jacket. It can get cold. See how I’m dressed? Do the same. Then meet me outside in one minute. We’re going to eat lunch in the mess hall. But first we’re hiking,” Spinach said. “Most of you have been here before. But Arrow Pines has changed. I want to show you around.”

Spinach started to walk out of the cabin. “Come outside now,” he called. “Or we’re leaving without you.”

The cabin housed 10 students. They slept in bunk beds. Each bunk had a mattress. Plastic covered each one. It kept out the critters. Campers put their things on their bunk. Some had already rolled out their sleeping bags.

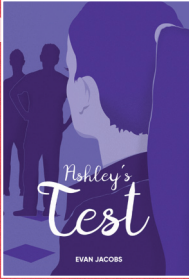
“Excuse me,” Marlon said. He tapped Spinach on the shoulder. “Is your name really Spinach?”

“Is your name really Marlon?” Spinach smiled.

“Come on,” Marlon said, laughing. “What’s your real name?”

“Spinach,” he said. “I love *Popeye*.”

“Did you see the movie from 1980?” Marlon asked. He loved *all* movies.



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It's time for science camp. Walden Lane's eighth graders are heading to the mountains. Marlon and Steve are thrilled. A full week without parents. No homework either. Then Marlon learns about a jailbreak. Will it affect outdoor ed?



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