

Who Dunit? A Solar Mystery

Another day was winding down on Camp Crystal Lake, and all the campers were washing up for dinner. Meanwhile, the counselors had gathered in the main hall, preparing for the night's entertainment. Buffy had ducked outside and was hiding behind the dumpster, trying to get reception on her cell phone. Using cell phones was strictly off-limits, but Buffy hadn't talked to Lance in over a week. She waited and waited for her service to kick in, but all she got was gibberish. When she finally got a call to go through, Lance's voice was swamped with static and then disappeared. Buffy slammed her Boost iRazr Boysenberry against the side of the dumpster and dragged herself back into the staff meeting.

When she got back in she immediately noticed Jason, the camp coordinator, talking in a hushed tone to the staff. He explained that the backwoods expedition hadn't returned from their overnight survival trip yet. He had tried to contact them over and over, but even the trip's satellite beacon wasn't responding. He reassured the staff and reminded them to keep the kids distracted, as they were starting to ask when their chums would be back.

After dinner, the group gathered at the sand pit for the nightly bonfire. Before dusk had completely fallen, little Johnny Crummet stood up and shouted, "What's that stuff in the sky?" Counselor Marvin, who was a sophomore at Crystal Lake Technical College, replied. "Never fear, John. That's nothing more than the Aurora Borealis. Charged particles from the solar wind are buffeting the Earth's ionosphere, which excites oxygen and nitrogen molecules. These molecules release photons of red, green and blue visible radiation, giving us the Northern Lights".

"Charged whaticles?" Johnny exclaimed, looking a bit overwhelmed.
"Never mind, just have another marshmallow" replied Marvin.

As the campers readied for bed, Jason was able to contact Mr. Krueger, Camp Crystal Lake's Director, using a traditional phone, as his cell had become completely useless. Upon hearing the news of the missing campers, Mr. K immediately packed up a bag and headed out to his float plane. Mr. K lived in a cabin on a more remote lake, accessible only by plane. As he went through his takeoff sequence, he realized he had a major problem. His GPS guidance system was not responding. No matter how long it tried to communicate with the 24 orbiting satellites, his GPS receiver could not plot his coordinates. Without his guidance system, there was no way Mr. K could attempt a night landing on Crystal Lake. He'd have to try later.

Meanwhile, out near Rattlesnake Gulch, the overnight survival group was in big trouble. They were five hours behind schedule and nowhere near the rendezvous site. Both

Tex and Penelope, the trip leaders, were having a hard time holding back their frustration and concern. According to the GPS coordinates, they should be standing back in camp, but it was nowhere in sight. The kids kept asking, "Are we there yet? When can we have some real food? I'm tired of eating moss!" Tex tried the GPS unit once more, but still nothing. Before long, they would have to bed down for the night. Penelope sure wished she had brought her compass now.

The campers had gathered once more for the nightly singing of "Sweet Dreams, Camp Crystal Lake" in the main hall. Just as they began, the lights on the main chandelier flickered once, twice and then went dead, along with every last bit of electricity in the entire camp. Sally Sue Hoo let out a "EIEIEIEKKEIEIEIKKK!!" in terror as the group fumbled around to find flashlights. Nelson Jones lit his lighter, which was quickly confiscated. Jason and the others did their best to guide the campers back to their cabins, but the kids were now truly terrified.

After the kids were in bed, Buffy decided she had to get out of there, and fast. She wasn't on duty again for 48 hours, so she hopped in her car and started the drive to Lance's house, 2 hours away in the next county. As she drove, the aurora was even more impressive, with shimmering curtains of green and red light. But she'd had enough. She didn't want to see Camp Crystal Lake for a long time. She turned on her satellite radio, hoping to hear some soothing country and western. However, the receiver went from channel to channel with nothing but silence. She was really starting to get freaked out.

Buffy had never driven these roads at night before, and all the pine trees were starting to look alike. Before long, she realized that she was lost. She flipped on her onboard guidance computer, thanking Daddy in her head for the boring but useful gift. She said, "Computer, Lance's house". Nothing. "Computer, Lance's house, NOW!!!!". Again, an empty silence. When it finally came on, Computer said "You are now at Shadylane Mall". She found herself driving faster and faster, but with no idea where she was going. Finally, she pulled over and put her head in her hands, sobbing uncontrollably. After a few minutes, she settled down and thought, "OK, what would my sorority sisters do at this point?" Then she wiped the tears away and noticed an old cabin set back from the road, off in the distance.

A solitary candle lit a single window, and Buffy thought she might have seen the shadow of a person pass by. Not knowing what else to do, she slowly made her way to the door. Just as she was about to knock, the door opened and Buffy jumped. Before her stood a giant of a man, with ragged clothes, no shoes and an old hockey mask covering his face. Buffy started to yell, but nothing came out. She turned to run, but her feet wouldn't move. Unphased, the man slowly lifted his mask and said, "Hi, I'm Chucky. Can I help you?"

