

TECHNICALITY

Written by

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INT. CHURCH CAMP CAFETERIA - EVENING

Establishing shots of cabins, woods, docks lined with kayaks. Children aged five through eighteen wearing matching camp t-shirts sit in a dated cafeteria.

MAGGIE

Lord, as we gather here before this table, we pause to give thanks for the bounty of the earth from which this meal came forth. Create in us a new spirit, that we may bear fruit for others and so... and share our life with the world.

MAGGIE(17) is frozen, hands clasped, eyes open.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

By that same power... create human society anew... create human society anew...

CAM(17), who sits directly next to Maggie, elbows her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

With justice as its measurement and compassion for a cornerstone, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN

Amen.

Everyone in the cafeteria begins eating. Maggie stares down, not touching her food.

MAGGIE

Thanks Cam, I'm sorry about that.

CAM

Where were you? You've had the dinner prayer memorized since you could walk.

MAGGIE

I...I don't know, it's nothing. Even Jesus gets distracted sometimes right?

CAM

Are you saying you're Jesus? If so, I have some questions.

MAGGIE

I'm not-

CAM
Number one, is the sin in the act
or the feeling? Because Fifty
Shades of Grey is great
aesthetically speaking, and I just
think if we--

Ryan (17), walks up to Cam.

RYAN
Cam! Are you still coming to the
...

He lowers his voice.

RYAN (CONT'D)
...to the party tonight? You know I
could use a little...

Ryan mimes smoking a cigarette.

CAM
(apathetic)
Wouldn't miss it, Ryan.

Ryan walks away. Cam turns back to Maggie.

CAM (CONT'D)
He's crazy if he thinks I'm going.
Lord knows that isn't my scene.

MAGGIE
Party?

Cam nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
How come I didn't know about it?

CAM
Honestly, I didn't think it was
your scene either. Everyone knows
you're... a little more into this
than most of us.

MAGGIE
What?

CAM
Not a bad thing, just an
observation.

Maggie looks silently at the room around her. Other
counselors her age talk and laugh. She stays quiet.

CAM (CONT'D)
Thank God for meatloaf, though.

INT. CAMP CABIN - NIGHT

Maggie paces as her campers mull about the cabin, chatting and tucking themselves into bed. EVA (10), sits on the end of her bed near Maggie.

EVA
I actually really do think that going to the ropes course would strengthen my relationship with Christ.

MAGGIE
Eva, it's dark, that's super dangerous.

EVA
My middle name is dangerous.

TRINITY (10) and RACHEL (9), from a nearby bunk, chime in.

TRINITY
My middle name is Grace.

EVA
Nobody asked you.

RACHEL
My middle name is Chastity.

MAGGIE
...Well, good talk! Now if you ladies will get back in your own beds before Jade comes by, that'd be amazing.

RACHEL
I can't sleep.

MAGGIE
Try a little harder, sis.

As the girls sort into their assigned bunks, Maggie flips the light off and slips out the front door.

EXT. CAMP CABIN - NIGHT

Maggie exits the cabin to see Cam already there, leaning against the outside wall.

CAM
Long night, Magdalene?

MAGGIE
Don't call me that. No one's called me that in forever, it makes me sound like a loser.

CAM
(mocking)
Oh, yeah, sorry, it would totally suck if the kids you've been going to mass with for sixteen years found out you have a biblical name.

MAGGIE
(laughing)
Alright, take it easy.

Cam pulls out a box of American Spirits and a silver lighter. Maggie notices Cam lighting a cigarette.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Um... I didn't know you...

CAM
Smoke?

MAGGIE
Yeah.

CAM
Only recently.

Beat.

MAGGIE
I just- Why?

CAM
Same reason anyone else does. Feels good.

MAGGIE
You can't feel good other ways?

CAM
I mean, the Catholic Church generally frowns upon vibrators and comedy movies. All the good ones anyway.

MAGGIE

Is it like a cry for help or something?

CAM

Damn, you're kind of drilling me.

MAGGIE

Sorry.

Beat. Cam takes a drag.

CAM

I think it's the divorce.

MAGGIE

I thought you were fine with it.

CAM

I am. But it's a small community. Everyone knows about it. I kinda lost a lot of friends, and I tried all this stuff to get my mind off it. And none of that worked. So I tried... other stuff.

MAGGIE

Other stuff being...

CAM

Cloves, nutmeg, whatever I could get my hands on. And eventually cigarettes.

MAGGIE

Huh.

CAM

And, of course, there's the cocaine.

MAGGIE

What?

CAM

No, I'm messing with you.

Cam takes another drag. Footsteps approach. She panics and puts out her cigarette on her shoe. JADE(27), steps onto the porch.

JADE

Hey, girls, everyone asleep?

MAGGIE
Should be.

JADE
Ugh, so proud. Keep up the good
work, and let's get pumped for a
big day tomorrow!

JADE leaves, and CAM and MAGGIE start to head inside.

CAM
(sarcastically)
Yeah, get pumped, Maggie!

Maggie rolls her eyes.

INT. CAMP CABIN - THE NEXT MORNING

Maggie puts on a tie-dye shirt in the empty cabin. She throws
a tote bag over her shoulder and reaches for the door.
Instead, Jade opens it and startles her.

MAGGIE
Jade!

JADE
Maggie!

MAGGIE
Hey!

JADE
Hey! Let's chat real quick.

MAGGIE
Oh, um, I really have to go join my
group.

JADE
This'll only take a second.

Jade sits on a bunk. Maggie considers for a moment, then
joins her.

JADE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to let you know that
we really need to be enforcing our
camp policies this year. The other
counselors and I have noticed more
and more... un-Christ-like
behavior.

MAGGIE
Really? I hadn't--

JADE
This stuff is serious. Kids around this age really try to push the line of what they can do without directly disobeying the Word. But trust me, nobody wants to get into Heaven on a technicality.

MAGGIE
Right.

JADE
And of course we don't want to shepherd these kids into the arms of the Devil.

MAGGIE
...Uh-huh.

JADE
I'm so glad we're understood.

Jade gets up to leave.

JADE (CONT'D)
Oh! Could you run to the store to grab stuff for s'mores tonight?

MAGGIE
Y-yeah.

JADE
Great. I'll see you in a bit! Put on some sunscreen.

Jade leaves, and Maggie sits in silence.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Maggie walks through the aisles of a general store, holding a box of graham crackers, chocolate bars, and marshmallows. As she stands in line, she stares at a Teen Vogue magazine on display. She flips through it. Luke (20) stands behind the counter.

LUKE
You ready?

Maggie jumps.

MAGGIE
Yeah, yeah, sorry.

She drops the s'mores ingredients onto the counter. She hesitates and adds the magazine. She looks at Luke's half smoked pack of cigarettes sitting next to the register. Luke follows her gaze and holds up an unopened box American spirits.

LUKE
Anything else?

MAGGIE
Umm...uh...one second.

Maggie tucks her cross necklace under her shirt before running back to a shelf to grab a small jar of nutmeg. She sets it on the counter.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Okay, now I'm good.

Luke smiles. He starts ringing her up.

LUKE
Are you from that church camp down the street?

Maggie shakes her head.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Just wearing the shirt for fun?

MAGGIE
Oh uh...I just...

LUKE
Relax. You kids are alright. Enjoy that...

He hands her the nutmeg.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Be safe.

Maggie places a 20 dollar bill on the counter before picking up the bag and heading towards the door.

MAGGIE
Uh, thank you.

LUKE
God bless.

INT. CAMP CABIN - EVENING

Maggie enters the room and grabs the magazine out of her bag. She looks over her shoulder to confirm she is alone.

MAGGIE

Anyone home?

She waits in silence for a few seconds before pulling the nutmeg out of the bag and placing the bag on the ground. She climbs the ladder to her bunk and and rips out a page of the magazine. She pours nutmeg onto the cover and lines it up. She glances at the door before rolling up the page. She leans down and snorts the line. She immediately starts sniffing and coughing. She hears the door open.

JADE

Maggie! I didn't know you were back, I was starting to worry.

Maggie quickly covers the magazine with her blanket and knocks over the jar of nutmeg in the process. She covers her cough with her hand for a few seconds before attempting a conversation.

MAGGIE

Yeah, sorry! I just, I was tired when I got back, so-

JADE

Well, I'm sure Moses was tired when he parted the Red Sea. And you just have eleven-year-olds. Let's get going.

Jade leaves, the door open behind her, and Maggie lets out a sigh. She looks down at all of the nutmeg that spilled.

MAGGIE

(under her breath)

Dammit.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Short sequence of shots at that night's bonfire. Counselors between 16 and 19 party together, about three notches below a party out of HBO's Euphoria. They chat, make smore's, dance. A girl pops open a beer with a purity ring. Maggie doesn't partake, but we see her really enjoying herself, riding out her high.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Maggie, Cam, Ryan, MARK (18), and ESTE (17) walk through the woods, the bonfire still buzzing behind them with other counselors. Ryan, Este, and Mark stumble a bit, having been drinking at the bonfire.

MARK

So that's what I told her, she
wasn't being a woman of God.

MAGGIE

...because she posted bikini pics
on Instagram?

RYAN

I think that's totally fine
actually.

ESTE

Oh, sure, Ryan gets brownie points
for letting girls wear what they
want.

RYAN

Leave me alone.

ESTE

I heard her purity ring is Tiffany.

MAGGIE

I think she's a nice girl, we had
English together.

ESTE

Wait, she goes to my school, how
come I haven't seen you around?

MARK

Didn't you used to be like super
quiet?

MAGGIE

I guess-

ESTE

Yeah, but it doesn't matter, you're
kinda cool as hell.

MARK

You can't say hell.

ESTE
You can say hell if you're talking
about the place.

RYAN
Are you?

ESTE
In a sense, yes.

They arrive at a fork in the path.

RYAN
Alright, I'm uphill, Maggie, Cam,
I'll see you at breakfast.

ESTE
Bye, Maggie!

Ryan, Mark, and Este take the left route, and Cam and Maggie
take the right. They start to walk together.

EXT. CAMP CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie and Cam arrive at the cabin, leaning against the wall.
There's a moment of silence. Cam is just as reserved as she's
been the whole night.

MAGGIE
That was fun, I like those guys.

CAM
Are you high?

MAGGIE
What?

CAM
You're acting weird, are you high?

MAGGIE
Why do you care if I am?

CAM
I don't, you can do whatever you
want, but I know you care.

MAGGIE
Why would I care?

CAM
This is Ryan and them, this isn't
you.

MAGGIE

But it could be. What's the problem? You smoke.

CAM

I smoke because I'm miserable.

MAGGIE

I can be miserable. You can't make being miserable your thing.

CAM

Weed?

MAGGIE

Nutmeg.

CAM

Weird. Why?

MAGGIE

Well, it's like... not technically a drug.

CAM

But I mean, you got high.

MAGGIE

Yeah, but like, weed is a sin.

CAM

It's not in the Bible.

MAGGIE

(stunned)

Weed isn't in the Bible?!

CAM

No! Of course not! You think Jesus of Nazareth knew about THC gummies?

MAGGIE

Woah.

Beat.

CAM

But yeah, nutmeg's fine.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - THE NEXT DAY

Maggie stands near a shelf of spices. She fidgets with her necklace and the edge of her shirt.

She puts down the bottle of nutmeg she's holding, and instead picks up a small jar of cloves. She walks to the register. Luke once again works the counter.

LUKE
How's it going...?

MAGGIE
Maggie.

LUKE
Maggie. Cloves?

MAGGIE
Yeah, I have to make a... soup?

LUKE
A soup.

MAGGIE
Mhm.

LUKE
Do you have any rolling paper for your... soup?

MAGGIE
No, um... maybe I'll try Whole Foods?

LUKE
You can borrow mine. Give me five to clock out.

Maggie smiles and waits while Luke exits into the back room of the store.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

Maggie and Luke sit in a hammock by the lake, letting their legs swing over the side, smoking cloves.

MAGGIE
I don't think it was ever really a question. My church has done a lot for me. Scholarships, volunteering, all that. And my friends and family are all there.

LUKE
That's the exit cost.

MAGGIE
What's an exit cost?

LUKE
It's like a cult thing-

MAGGIE
Careful.

LUKE
Okay, it's like a normal group of
people thing. Where you can't leave
something because it would cost you
if you left. Cost you friends.
Family. Scholarships, sure.

Beat.

MAGGIE
Well, I don't like to think about
it that way.

LUKE
But I do.

MAGGIE
It's just not that easy for me to
think about. Why can you?

LUKE
Nobody ever told me that God would
be worried what I thought of him.
You can't think about it because
you feel bad for the guy.

MAGGIE
I don't-

LUKE
Do you think you could ever stop
believing in God?

MAGGIE
I guess not.

LUKE
And do you want him to think you
don't care?

MAGGIE
No. I-

LUKE

Then it'll just be in the back of
your mind. You can still do
whatever you want. Change your mind
about things. But you'll still
think about him. Like an estranged
parent or a childhood pet.

Maggie thinks for a moment. She takes a drag and coughs
violently. Luke pats her on the back.

LUKE (CONT'D)

(teasing)

Christ, Maggie, can't hold your
smoke? You alright?

She stops coughing.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Catholic guilt, huh?

MAGGIE

Catholic guilt, exit cost. Whatever
you want to call it.

INT. CHURCH CAMP CAFETERIA - DAY

Sitting across from Maggie, Jade pulls out a box full of
silly bands. She clears them off the top to reveal Maggie's
half empty nutmeg jar and a few rolled up magazine pages.

MAGGIE

I don't- How did you- you know how
important God is to me.

JADE

Of course I do, I can see it in
your heart. But this is appalling
behavior.

MAGGIE

I can go to confession.

JADE

No, what-- I just need your help
figuring out who did it.

MAGGIE

You... you don't know who did it?

JADE

Do you?

MAGGIE

No, no... no I don't. Where- where did you say you found it again?

JADE

I know this is alarming, but in your bunk. I need you to find which one of your sisters it is and help us... lead them back to God.

MAGGIE

I...I can try.

JADE

God bless you, Maggie. You truly are a gift to this camp.

INT. CAMP CABIN - DAY

In a montage, Maggie interviews her campers one-on-one.

RACHEL

Maybe you should pray on it.

MAGGIE

That's a really good point. But while we're waiting on our prayers to be answered, do you know anything about the box?

RACHEL

Nothing, I swear.

EVA

I didn't even know you could smoke nutmeg.

MAGGIE

I mean, you really shouldn't, but you can.

EVA

Is it good?

MAGGIE

No. No, it's mind-altering. It's sinful.

EVA

No, just like taste-wise.

MAGGIE

Oh, I don't know.

TRINITY

I think maybe their clothes would
smell like nutmeg.

MAGGIE

Trinity, I'm not smelling people to
find out what they smoked.

TRINITY

Well, you're not a very good
interrogator.

EVA

Is it fun to be high?

MAGGIE

No.

EVA

Then why do people do it?

MAGGIE

It feels good, I think.

EVA

It feels good, but it's not fun?

MAGGIE

...yeah.

RACHEL

(nervously)

I just...

MAGGIE

What's up?

RACHEL

What happens if someone gets
caught?

MAGGIE

Well, they'd probably go home with
their parents.

RACHEL

But then do they go to hell?

MAGGIE

I mean, I...

RACHEL

How long does it take to do drugs?

MAGGIE
What do you mean?

RACHEL
Like one minute? Two minutes?

MAGGIE
Sure.

RACHEL
(scared)
That's so fast. You can go to hell
so fast.

MAGGIE
No, you're okay, you're okay. It's
really...

Maggie looks around the cabin, spotting Bibles covered in
stickers, crucifixes with friendship bracelets tied to them.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
God is... you know, forgiving.
Things like this happen all the
time. I mean, everyone makes
mistakes growing up. It's just part
of it.

Rachel relaxes a bit.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Look, if you did do it, you can ask
for forgiveness and you'll be fine.
And you can feel okay about it,
eventually. You'll learn from it,
and you'll get over it.

Beat.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
And you don't have to tell me.

INT. CHURCH CAMP CAFETERIA - EVENING

Jade sits at a table flipping through a Bible, making note
cards and murmuring to herself. Maggie enters the cafeteria
with her head low. She approaches and sits across from Jade.

JADE
Maggie, you scared me! How are you
doing?

Maggie's eyes dart around the room, she looks tense and overwhelmed.

MAGGIE

I couldn't find them.

JADE

Couldn't find what? Christ? Look, I know your devotional group isn't the best, but each individual has a journey--

MAGGIE

No, not...the camper who had the nutmeg. No one owned up. I'm sure...they feel really guilty, but I think they are scared of the consequences.

Jade lets out a little laugh, and re-opens her Bible.

JADE

Is that all? You worried me for a minute.

MAGGIE

You're not upset?

JADE

Oh, Maggie. I know it's surprising, but this kind of thing happens every year. Last year, I found 25 empty hair spray cans in a bush outside the boys cabin.

MAGGIE

You can get high off hairspray?

JADE

I guess they could, Lord help them. Just from a mechanical standpoint, I can't even figure it out.

MAGGIE

Huh.

JADE

This is not your fault, Maggie. At this age, they all stray a little bit.

MAGGIE

Do they find their way back?

JADE

Sometimes. But in the end, their religion becomes an active choice. Some of them stop making it.

MAGGIE

And that's okay?

JADE

Of course not, they're damned to hell.

MAGGIE

Oh.

JADE

But you're not. And I know you'll be forgiven for any mistakes you make. You're a good Catholic. You don't need to worry about others.

Beat.

JADE (CONT'D)

Why don't you go get ready for dinner? You can lead the prayer again tonight.

MAGGIE

Hey, um... maybe you should ask Rachel. She's been asking.

Maggie turns and walks out of the cafeteria. Jade goes back to perfecting her speech under her breath.

EXT. CAMP CABIN - NIGHT

Luke, Cam, and Maggie stand outside the cabin. Luke and Cam smoke cigarettes.

MAGGIE

I didn't even know how to answer. I was just trying to cover my ass without sending any of these girls home.

CAM

I got interrogated back in fourth grade. Scared the shit out of me.

LUKE

That actually happens? That's kinda culty.

MAGGIE

Careful.

CAM

(sarcastic)

He doesn't have to worry, he's
going to hell either way.
Nonbeliever.

LUKE

I see a lot of you guys in my
store. Smokers who don't know about
smoking. Couples who don't know
about sex.

MAGGIE

This was all so much easier when we
were kids. We didn't know anything.

CAM

And don't you feel smarter?

Luke laughs as he let's out a drag. Cam pulls out a cigarette
and lights it.

CAM (CONT'D)

You want one?

MAGGIE

I'm good.

Maggie reaches into her pocket and pulls out a bright orange
Elf Bar. She takes a hit.

CAM

(laughing)

God bless you, Magdalene.