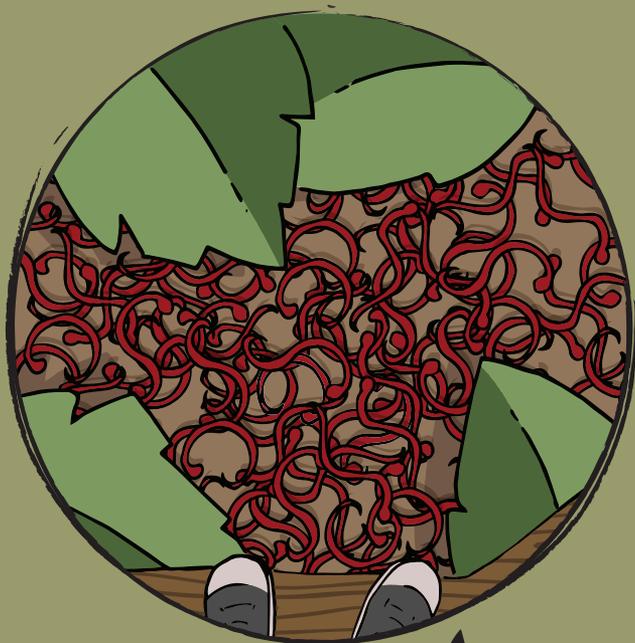


SOMETHING SINISTER

by Dr. Roy Smith



THE CAMPFIRE GANG



BOOK #77



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ISBN: 978-1-942292-40-1

Published by LiveUp Resources
200 North 7th Street
Lebanon, PA 17046

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Illustrations and book design by Jory Kauffman

Printed in the United States of America

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Questions for Discussion

*Dedicated to those who have great value
and God-given potential. (This means you!)
As you enjoy this series, may you discover
your greatness.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

*I am honored to be part of the journey of the following
young men. May you grow strong, have courage,
act wisely, and change the world.*

*Silas, Jorah, Alexander, Nathan, Mason, William, Connor,
Lucas, Cody, Elijah, Kent, Colt, Ian, AJ, CJ, JJ, Gavin,
Ryder, Braxton, Dominic, Francis, Jules, Tristen, Wyatt,
Connor James, Everett*

*It is my privilege to be part of the lives of the following
amazingly gifted and powerful young women.
May you make a difference in the world.*

Remi, Reese, Alycea, Joy

The Jungle





CHAPTER 1

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

Underneath the thick, leafy jungle canopy, the gang continued to pull the big boat down the cleared path. The logs underneath it groaned under the weight of all the smoked fish it was carrying.

And the logs weren't the only ones groaning. Dragging such a heavy load through the jungle wasn't exactly easy. The gang couldn't help but let out an occasional groan as they pulled the vines attached to the front of the boat.

Luckily, they had a few strong Gorilla friends to make the task a little easier. And it always helped to have a friend like Toby who could

lighten the mood.

“Hyah!” Toby cried from his perch on top of the pile of fish. He cracked a make-believe whip and shouted, “Faster, faster!”

“Ne-e-e-eigh!” the rest of the gang replied.

Nehemiah turned and looked at the boys with a puzzled expression. “Uh, what are you doing? Are you okay?”

John laughed. “We’re just pretending to be horses.”

“Toby’s the chariot driver,” Spencer explained. “And we’re the horses pulling the chariot!”

Haggai frowned in confusion. “What’s a horse?” he asked.

“Haven’t you read about horses in the books in your library?” John asked.

The Gorillas just stared at him blankly.

“Well,” John continued, “they’re these big, four-legged, furry animals you can ride around on. They eat a lot of grass, and they poop everywhere.”



Nehemiah grimaced. “They eat *grass*?! They sound disgusting!”

Kerry laughed. “They’re actually pretty cool. They can run super fast, and they’re really strong.”

“Hey Nehemiah!” Toby hollered down. “Are you slacking off down there?”

“Come on Nehemiah, say ‘neigh!’” John demonstrated once more for the Gorilla.

Nehemiah took a deep breath and let out the longest, loudest neigh the gang had ever heard! Pretty soon he had the other Gorillas joining in too. Hearing the mighty Gorillas attempt to make high-pitched, bellowing horse sounds made everyone laugh so hard they couldn’t even pull the boat.

Toby spent most of the ride back to the zone sitting up above the others and yelling out orders. Everything was going pretty smoothly, at least until the log at the front of the boat bumped

into a rock. Everyone jolted to an abrupt stop, including the boat—which sent Toby sailing off the pile of fish, through the air, and right into the arms of Zechariah.

Everyone howled with laughter once again at the sight of Toby cradled like a baby in the arms of the giant Gorilla. Zechariah bent down and set him on the ground carefully. Not to be outdone, Toby immediately started giving Zechariah tips on better ways to catch him the next time.

“He never stops, does he?” Haggai said with a smile.

BB shook his head, still laughing.

The guys continued to poke fun at each other as they started hauling the boat down the path again. After a while, they stepped into a clearing surrounded by huge trees and crisscrossing vines.

In the middle of the clearing stood the biggest Gorilla of all. He thumped his chest three

times in greeting. The boys thumped back and ran up to him.

“Obadiah!” BB exclaimed. “You won’t believe what happened. Lucifer tried to attack us again, and he almost got Pete!”

Obadiah looked at Pete with concern. “Are you all right?”

Pete nodded. “He made me hit my head pretty hard on the boat, but I feel fine now.”

“That’s good to hear,” Obadiah said. “We’ll need to be even more alert from now on. Lucifer’s always sneaking around, making trouble for us any way he can. And it seems like he’s not planning on stopping any time soon.”

The gang readily agreed, their good mood from earlier slipping away. They couldn’t help but feel uneasy about what Lucifer might try to do at the celebration.

Then Cliff perked up. “On the bright side,” he noted, “Lucifer didn’t get any of our fish!”

Obadiah looked over at the huge pile of smoked fish, and his whole face lit up in a smile.

“You boys have done a lot to provide food for our feast!” he said gratefully. “You will be our guests of honor at the celebration. You can sit with me and my family.”

“Wow, that would be great!” BB exclaimed. “Thanks Obadiah.”

Obadiah continued, “The others and I have been talking, and we’d love it if each of you would say something before the feast starts. We’ve already learned a lot from you boys. I’d really like the whole tribe to hear what you’ve learned from your journey so far.”

BB glanced at the rest of the gang. They all smiled happily and gave him a thumbs-up.

“Okay,” BB replied. “Looks like we all agree—we’ll do it!”

“Excellent!” Obadiah said. “Now why don’t all of you go get some rest. We’ll see you

tomorrow for the feast!”

He didn't have to tell them twice. Stopping just long enough to grab a big bunch of bananas to snack on, the gang bounced straight up the vine-covered trampolines into the treetops. They soon landed on one of the thick, sturdy tree limbs that acted like roads through the zone. They immediately flopped down and stretched out their tired arms and legs.

After devouring the bananas and relaxing for a bit, the gang started talking about Obadiah's request. They knew it was a huge responsibility to speak in front of the whole Gorilla tribe.

“I'm nervous just thinking about it,” Sammy admitted. “Public speaking makes me all jittery. But it's something I want to learn to do.”

“I was really nervous too when I gave my leadership speeches to the Lizards,” BB said. “But once I got up there and started talking, my nervousness kind of just disappeared.”

“I’m glad we can plan out what we’re going to say ahead of time,” Cliff chimed in. “I think that will help us feel more relaxed about it.”

“Okay, so what do we want to talk about?” BB asked.

“What if we all share a different lesson Pops has taught us?” John suggested.

“I like that idea,” Kerry said. “We’ve certainly learned *a ton* of lessons—especially since we got stuck down here in these underground worlds.”

The gang spent the next half hour discussing the different lessons they could each share with the Gorillas. Soon they had a list of topics for their speeches, and they’d even decided on what order they’d each speak in.

“It does make me feel a whole lot better having this figured out ahead of time,” Sammy said. “And now we can focus on finding other ways to help the Gorillas even more. As much as

I want to get home, I know Pops has a reason for us being stuck in these different underground worlds. So we might as well make the most of it while we're here.”

BB nodded. “And we can start by making this celebration one of the greatest the Gorillas have ever had! Besides giving a speech, what do you guys think about asking Obadiah if we can be their waiters for the feast?”

“That’s an awesome idea!” Spencer agreed. “I like helping others. And being the waiters will make the feast more about the Gorillas than about us. It’ll show them how much we value them and their friendship.”

“I don’t know,” Toby said. “I was looking forward to just relaxing at the celebration.”

A couple others nodded in agreement.

“Maybe we should see what the rock thinks about this idea,” Cliff said.

Cliff stood up and walked over to the

smooth, flat rock sitting nearby. As he stepped on top of it, the rock groaned and vibrated, and the voice said,

*“Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under his power. He also knew he had come from God and was returning to God.”**

John frowned in confusion. “Does anyone know what that’s supposed to mean?” he asked.

“My dad teaches people at church about Jesus every week,” Sammy said. “He’s Pops’s Son, and His mission was to live a perfect life. He died on a cross to take the punishment for our sins. The Bible says that after three days in a tomb, Jesus walked out alive. Then He went back to live with God.”

“Where does Pops live?” Toby asked.

“I think Pops lives everywhere,” Spencer replied. “I mean, he’s this powerful force who

* John 13:3

surrounds everyone all over the world, right? So he moves around, helping specific people wherever they are. He's even in all the weird worlds we've been in, including this one."

"Okay, so I get that Jesus is pretty powerful," John said. "But I'm still not sure how that applies to BB's idea of being waiters for the feast."

"Let's listen to the rock again," Pete said. "Sometimes standing on it a second time can help me get what it's trying to tell me."

As Pete stepped on the rock, it groaned and vibrated, and the voice said,

*"So [Jesus] got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him." **

* John 13:4-5

“Did Jesus really do that?” Toby asked incredulously. “Maybe it’s just me, but I don’t think God’s Son should’ve had to wash His friends’ feet. Talk about smelly!”

Spencer laughed. “Sure, but by washing their feet, Jesus showed how much He cared about them.”

“Jesus reminds me of Joshua, the guy we met back in the Lost Canyon,” Cliff said. “He was awesome, but he didn’t let it go to his head. He cared about us and the creatures down here enough to take care of all of us, no matter how dirty or difficult it was. Like when we had to cover up the drill holes!”

BB nodded. “In our world, the least powerful person usually serves the most powerful person. Like how an assistant does things for their boss. But Pops wants us *all* to help others, no matter who we are. If we trust what he tells us, he’ll show us what we can do to make others feel special.”

“Like being waiters at the celebration,” Kerry said. “Serving the Gorillas is a way we can show them honor and respect.”

“It’s funny how the rock always seems to know what’s going on in our lives,” John said thoughtfully. “It always has the advice we need at the exact right moment. We just have to be willing to listen and do what it says.”

“That’s a great way to put it, John,” BB said. “So the question is, are you guys willing to serve the Gorillas by being their waiters at the celebration? Do we trust Pops enough to help make others feel like they’re a big deal?”

“Aye!” everyone cheered.

Now that they had their game plan all set for the next day, the gang was ready to call it a night. They gathered up their stuff and headed off to the banana-leaf hammocks the Gorillas had given them to sleep in. Their worries about Lucifer still lingered in the back of their minds,

but with the celebration right around the corner, they couldn't help but feel like things were finally going right.

THIS IS A SAMPLE. SOME PAGES HAVE BEEN OMITTED.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

Good questions help us learn.

• • •

1. In [Chapter 1](#), Toby pretends to be a chariot driver while the gang pulls the cooked fish to the home zone. How do you make your work or chores more fun? Do you have a funny friend like Toby?
2. The gang decides to talk about different lessons Pops has taught them for their speech at the celebration ([page 9](#)). What important lessons has God taught you?
3. How does a young man or woman become an adult (page 19-22)? What are some ways you currently act mature like an adult?
4. What would your parents or teachers say you could improve on? How can you become better in those areas?
5. In Chapter 2, three Gorilla youngsters get into a fight. Who do you tend to get in fights with? What are some better ways to express how you feel? How could you handle a disagreement so it doesn't turn into a fight?
6. After their fight, Obadiah has the youngsters take some time alone to think about their choices (page 26). What consequences do you receive when you

don't do what's right? How can consequences help you learn from your mistakes?

7. In Chapter 3, Kerry is in such a hurry to get to Obadiah that he almost runs into poison snakes! How has going too fast gotten you in trouble before? How can listening to God help you slow down and focus?
8. Have you ever swung on vines before, like Kerry (page 39)? What are some of your favorite activities?
9. Sometimes a task feels impossible, like the gang trying to find all the gnawed trees (page 52). How do you tackle difficult tasks? How can making a plan first help the task seem easier?
10. The gang quickly realizes their plan will go faster if they work together (page 56). Have you ever been a part of a group project or a team? How was working together better than trying to do it alone?
11. The Gorillas talk about how having good character helps us get along well with others (page 61). How good are you at getting along with others? What can you improve in yourself to help strengthen your friendships?
12. Do you know any Marines like the old miner, or anyone else whose served in the military (page 64)? What do you think that experience was like for them?

13. Think about the JJ DID TIE BUCKLE character traits the Gorillas explain in Chapter 5. Which of them are you good at? Which need some work?
14. Who in your life demonstrates JJ DID TIE BUCKLE well? How can you learn from them how to practice those traits yourself?
15. Do you like playing in the mud? What would you do if you got stuck in Death Dirt like Kerry and Sammy (page 84)?
16. Kerry and Sammy get up to their chests in mud before calling to Pops for help (page 87). How easy or hard is it for you to ask for help? What do you need to ask Pops for help with?
17. Think about a current or recent problem you've had. What important life lessons could you learn from it?
18. Malachi remembers to stay calm when he's in a tough situation (page 111). How do you calm yourself down when you feel worried or afraid? What could you say to yourself to make you feel better?
19. Have you ever played a game like the blindfolded obstacle course at John's party (page 122)? How hard would it be to focus on another person's instructions when there are so many other distractions? How can you get better at not being distracted from what God wants you to do?

20. Wind explains how Pops can talk to us in many different ways (page 126). Where do you hear Pops's voice? How can you learn to tune in to him better?
21. Do you hoot more like the gang or the Gorillas in Chapter 9? Do you hoot better with your hips moving or being still? Give it a try!
22. What's something you're really good at? Have you ever learned to get better at something by watching someone else do it?
23. What's one verse the rock said that you want to remember? Write it down here:

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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After becoming a grandfather, Dr. Roy Smith was inspired to write a book series for his grandsons and for boys and men of all ages—so he embarked on a journey to creatively teach character development. Having been a psychologist and counselor for nearly 40 years, Roy understands how important it is for young men to develop and

use their full potential. Roy's goal is to help young men become mentally strong, address their emotions, and develop social skills, as well as meet God and integrate who He is and His Word into their daily decision-making. Then they can have a powerful impact on the world. To further contribute to the overarching goal of positively changing our culture, Roy developed LiveUp Resources, a ministry that produces books and video series for men, women, and youth. You can find out more about these life-changing resources at liveupresources.com.

IT'S TIME TO SAVE THE JUNGLE!

Lucifer is determined to ruin the Gorillas' celebration. And he's picked the perfect disguise to do it. It's a race against time for the gang to stop him and save the jungle. But this time, it's going to take more than just a little hard work!

Through it all, the boys learn lessons about life and about God. They never stop fighting for each other—and sometimes for their own lives!

*FIND ALL OF THE CAMPFIRE GANG ADVENTURES AT
www.TheCampfireGang.com*