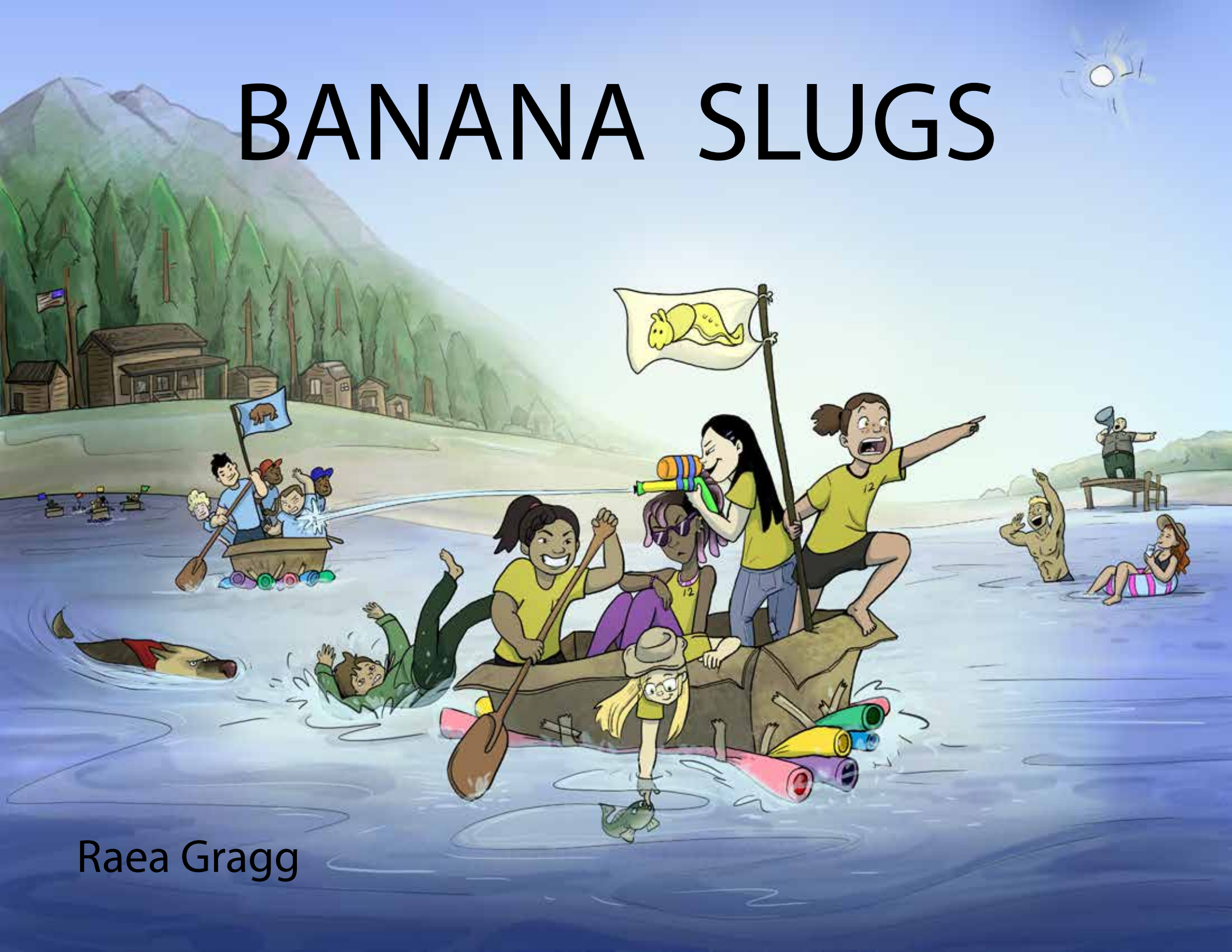


# BANANA SLUGS



Raea Gragg

# Middle Grade Graphic Novel Series

Girls ages 7-11

Inspired by the heartwarming work of Raina Telgemeier and the comedic appeal of Jeff Kinney's books, this graphic novel series combines cinematic storytelling with the perspective of a 12-year-old's camp journal.

Meet Annika Anderson, an over-eager and optimistic pre-teen who is on a mission to find her BFF (Best Friend Forever) at summer camp. But things don't go as planned, and Annika finds that making friends is more complicated than she first anticipated. Each book in the series focuses on Annika's adventures with a different camper, highlighting the unique challenges and joys of making friends.





# Annika Anderson

Annika, a quirky art kid, has just had her world turned upside down; she just moved across the country, leaving everything she has ever known behind, including her best friend. Annika comes up with a plan to spend the summer at Camp Wild Cat in hopes of finding the one thing she wants more than anything else: A Best Friend Forever.



## Annika Anderson:

Wants: a friend

Needs: to accept others for who they are

Fears: loneliness

Loves: a challenge

Fatal Flaw: tries too hard



An avid drawer and writer, Annika illustrates her camp experiences and mishaps in her own goofy style in her camp journal.



**Annika's drawing from her Camp Journal.**



# Samantha “Sam” Ching

Sam is an independent kid with a mind of her own. She plays by no one’s rules other than her own. She was sent to Camp Wild Cat for the summer because her family’s home burned down in a fire and her parents are searching for a new place to live. Sam has not fully recovered from the fire and is still holding onto her fear. Always trying to be in control and sticking to her own agenda, it will be hard for Sam to open up and ask for help.

## Sam Ching:

Wants: to appear invincible

Needs: to grow by accepting vulnerability

Fears: fire / lack of control

Loves: doing her own thing

Fatal Flaw: learning to accept change

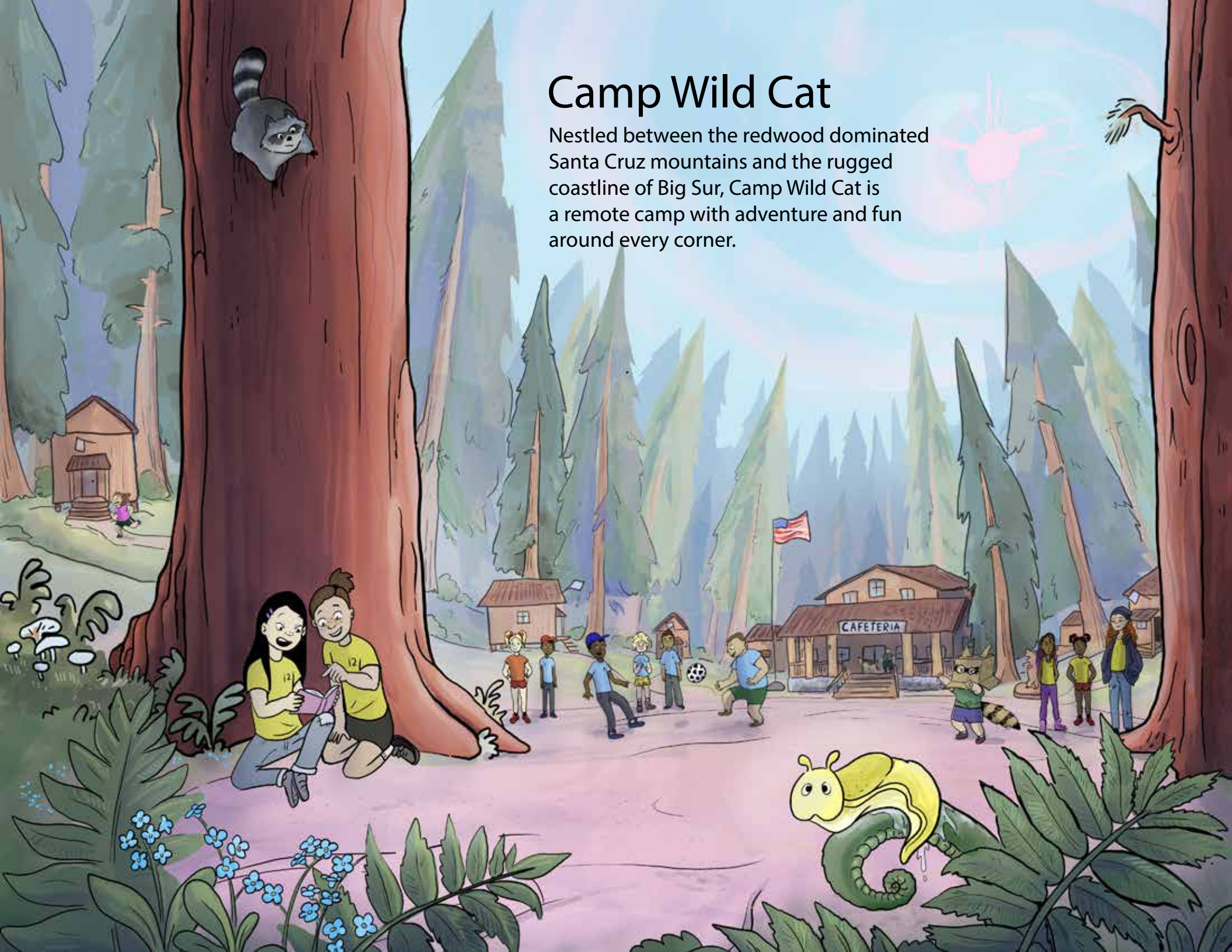


Sam’s drawing style



# Camp Wild Cat

Nestled between the redwood dominated Santa Cruz mountains and the rugged coastline of Big Sur, Camp Wild Cat is a remote camp with adventure and fun around every corner.



# BOOK ONE:

Annika can hardly contain her excitement as she boards the bus to Camp Wild Cat with her heart set on finding a BFF. But when Sam Ching plops down in the seat next to her, Annika's overwhelming eagerness repels Sam. Despite her best efforts to strike up a conversation, Sam seems uninterested in making new friends.

Things go from bad to worse when Annika and Sam end up in the same rundown cabin, complete with creaky bunks and a lame mascot - the Banana Slug. Annika can't help but feel disappointed and wonders if she made a mistake in coming.

However, when Annika catches Sam sneaking out of their cabin in the dead of night, she makes the split second decision to follow her. Sam, who is hankering for a snack, heads to the cafeteria where Annika catches up with her. Sam offers to be her friend, but only if Annika goes along with her plan.

Sam challenges Annika to prove she's as fun as she claims to be, leading to a late-night muffin heist and a daring escape from the camp staff. Giggling, they end up sitting on the beach under the stars, wondering what the rest of their week will look like.



As it turns out, the girls are in for quite a week! Annika and Sam are thrown into a schedule packed with mandatory activities like fencing, animal tracking, and hiking. Despite their initial disagreements, the girls work together to earn points for their cabin, determined to win the coveted pizza party prize.

Annika and Sam are navigating their fledgling friendship and learning what it means to be a good friend when their relationship comes to a head. Annika feels pressured by Sam to take risks and try new things while Sam resents Annika for holding her back from what she perceives as fun experiences.

The two get into an argument and decide they don't want to be friends any longer. Annika calls her mom to come pick her up. Maybe going to camp to look for a friend was a bad idea after all.







Annika gets picked up by her mom and drives away, disheartened by her failure to find real friendship, but then she suddenly finds an entry in her camp journal - from Sam! In her own words and doodles, Sam describes just how much her friendship with Annika means to her.

Annika asks to turn the car around and head back to camp where she finds Sam to apologize. The girls learn that they should never force the other to do something that they don't want to do - but they can be there to help each other overcome their fears.

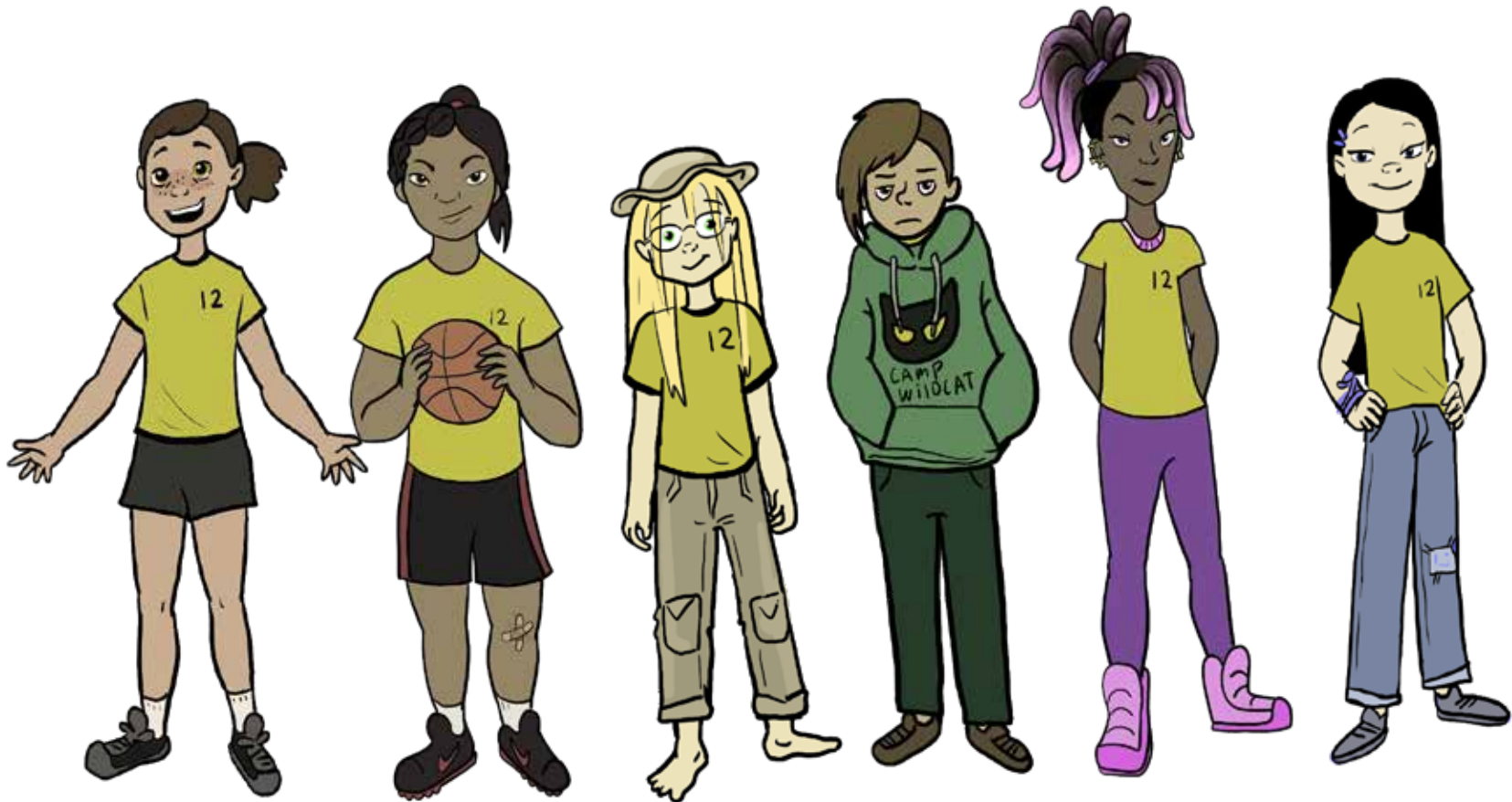
With that, Sam and Annika join their cabin mates and give them the courage to perform their end of the week skit!

Annika and Sam declare themselves **BEST FRIENDS FOREVER**. They are excited for the rest of the summer here at Camp Wild Cat and the adventures that may unfold.





# The Banana Slugs



**Annika**

**Lara**

**Mimi**

**TJ**

**Veronica**

**Sam**

# BOOK TWO

Things are going smoothly for Annika at Camp Wild Cat. She has made a new friend - Sam Ching. However, when Annika is suddenly paired with Mimi Mutsen, another girl in cabin 12, Annika has to completely start over and re-think what it means to make a new friend, especially since Mimi is unlike any girl Annika has ever met.

Mimi is a nature-loving, wild child, whose intricate knowledge of the forest and ocean keeps leading Annika astray during their tide pool/forest photography scavenger hunt.

Can Mimi and Annika overcome their vast differences and misunderstandings by finding common ground in something they both love dearly: the environment?

## Mimi Mutsen:

Wants: to be in the forest in her own world

Needs: to invite others into her world

Fears: people

Loves: the wilderness

Fatal Flaw: doesn't trust others



**Mimi's drawing style**

# BOOK THREE

Camp Olympics! Camp Wild Cat is hosting its annual Camp Olympics and all cabins will compete against one another for a grand sugary prize. Lara Nguyen has always been a winner, both academically and athletically. She even scored the winning goal for her U12 soccer team's championship game. Lara loves winning, but can she and Annika team up and steward the Banana Slugs to victory?

Book Three is a story about teamwork and compromise whilst navigating a rafting competition, fort construction, and various military-style survival training. (Think SURVIVOR but for kids.)

With humor at every turn, Annika and Lara will eventually learn to embrace failure and discover what it means to really work as a team.

## Lara Nguyen:

Wants: to win

Needs: to let others win / embrace teamwork

Fears: failure

Loves: sports and sweets

Fatal Flaw: too competitive



Lara's drawing style





# BOOK FOUR

The Banana Slugs are nearing the end of summer and each cabin gets to go on their “wilderness trek,” a highly anticipated backpacking adventure into the backcountry. The Grizzly Bears and Banana Slugs end up on the same trek. Veronica never wanted to go to Camp Wild Cat in the first place. Having to go into dirty, bug-infested backcountry is a bit too much. If she thought the camp’s bathrooms were bad, now she has to poop in a bag!

However, Veronica finds companionship where she least expects it - in Annika. Can these two city girls navigate and survive the great outdoors? This is a comedic adventure traversed by two soon-to-be #girlbosses.



## Veronica “Vee” Parker:

Wants: to go home

Needs: to embrace the wilderness

Fears: all things outside

Loves: cleanliness

Fatal Flaw: ego and pride / insecurity



Veronica’s drawing style

# BOOK FIVE

It's the last stretch of the wilderness backpacking trek and the grand finale of summer fun at Camp Wild Cat. The Grizzly Bears and Banana Slugs have finally found their groove and are enjoying the last miles of the trek together. That is until... TJ goes missing!

Annika bands the kids together to go off trail in search of TJ. When the group catches up with her, they realize their worst fears have come true: now they are all lost in the backcountry.

Now that the kids are in a dire situation of survival, everyone must put their differences aside in order to make it out. Will TJ, the most misunderstood member of the Banana Slugs, finally find the courage to talk and possibly lead the group back to civilization?

## Theresa Jones "TJ":

Wants: to be accepted

Needs: to find her voice and courage

Fears: what others think of her

Loves: being alone

Fatal Flaw: does not talk



# Other important characters from the series:



## Katrina "Kat" Yasko

Sixteen-year-old Kat grew up in the foster care system. This disgruntled teenager has to serve 100 hours of community service and chooses to fulfill those hours by working as a youth camp counselor. Therefore, her summer at camp feels like a prison sentence of mandatory babysitting.

She is the leader of the Banana Slugs in cabin 12. Despite her laissez-faire attitude and chillax enforcement of the camp's rules, Kat has a big heart and learns to love her pestering pre-teens.

For Annika, Kat is like the big sister she never had. And for Kat, camp helps her find the family she never had.

Kat:

Wants: to be left alone

Needs: to belong

Fears: being worthy of love

Loves: feeling like a grown-up

Fatal Flaw: hides her feelings



# Theo Cho

Theo is the 17-year-old heart throb of camp. I mean... look at those biceps. What is not to love? If only Theo wasn't the counselor for the Banana Slug's rival boy cabin: the Grizzly Bears.

Theo isn't just smoking hot, he is also thoughtful and empathetic, and very good at talking about his feelings... if only people would listen.

Kat fosters a complicated crush on Theo and it might just be the one thing she is interested in this summer. However, the Banana Slug girls don't make her life any easier once they realize she has a crush on Theo.

## Theo Cho:

Wants: to have a good time

Needs: to be accepted for who he is and not just his pretty face

Fears: upholding his "popular persona"/ not showing his soft side

Loves: adrenaline rushes (and kittens!)

Fatal Flaw: too good looking



# The Counselors

Each teen counselor has a back story as to why they ended up at Camp Wild Cat for the summer.



**Kat**

Serving 100 hours for misdemeanors like skipping school.



**Nathaniel**

Let loose his spider colony at his high school and is more interested in insects than kids.



**Bethany**

Volunteered so she could get content for her college admissions essay. (Plus she LOVES kids!)



**Theo**

Parents forced him to work at camp to pay for his speeding ticket.

# The Grizzly Bear Boys

The Grizzly Bear boys from Cabin 1 prove to be the Banana Slug's biggest rival in all camp-related activities. This seemingly unstoppable crew has a big bully of a leader - Gino. Gino and his gang turn out to be quite the trouble makers at Camp Wild Cat.



**Gino**

**Jared and Justin**

**Everett**

**Carson**

**Brian**



# Ms. Sunny

An ex-military cop who runs Camp Wild Cat, Ms. Sunny's fun, upbeat personality is dedicated to helping today's youth appreciate nature, foster healthy choices, and encourage leadership and positive friendships. However, she rules with an iron fist when it comes to safety and rule-following. She depends on her retired police dog, Mr. Muffin to keep a watchful eye on her campers and counselors.



**Mr. Muffin**

**Ms. Sunny**

## Bonus Books (more shenanigans)

1. Sam and Annika are bored at camp and spy on their counselor, Kat, and discover her diary. The girls learn that Kat has a secret crush on Theo! So, they set out on a mission to help get the two together, despite having to coordinate group activities with their rival cabin - the dreaded Grizzly Bears. Everything comes to a head when Kat realizes the kids read her diary. Feeling betrayed, Kat decides she would rather spend time in juvie than finishing her community service at Camp Wild Cat. It's up to Annika and Sam to own up to their mistake and help Kat feel like she is worthy of love and truly belongs.

2. Mr. Muffin, the dog, is haunted by a nightmare from his previous life as a search and rescue K9, where he narrowly saved a missing kid. Mr. Muffin wakes up and starts his daily camp routine, making sure everything is in order. Except today, the camp will be doing the "California shake out" a state-wide earthquake drill. A group of three kids - Gino, Annika, and Sam - don't take the drill seriously. Then, out of nowhere, the camp experiences a REAL EARTHQUAKE. Mr. Muffin has to save the three mischievous kids - but can he do it? After a daring rescue, Mr. Muffin and the kids get interviewed and the news reporter is none other than the same kid Mr. Muffin rescued all those years ago. Mr. Muffin learns that he can still be a hero even during his retirement!

3. Gino is having a tough time at camp. It's hard getting along with everyone. He tries to be the leader but bullies everyone into doing things his way. Picking on others only builds resentment, not connection, amongst his peers. This results in Gino feeling frustrated and more isolated than ever. His bad behavior escalates so much that he is going to be sent home - much to the joy of his rivals, the Banana Slug girls. But instead of being sent home, Gino decides to run away rather than face his shame. Annika is left with a troubling choice: should she help look for Gino, a boy who has only ever been mean to her? Or does she let Gino stay lost? Will Annika and Gino learn to forgive one another and possibly... become friends?

# The Skunks

A Companion Graphic Novel Series

For boys ages 7-11

Focusing on a brand new cast of characters at Camp Wild Cat, the Skunks are a group of 12-year-old boys in Cabin 5. This crew of misfits faces their own drama and escapades at Camp Wild Cat. They have run-ins with Ms. Sunny and Mr. Muffin and their rival girls' group, the Starfish, all while exploring freedom, nature, and the cringe-worthy moments of growing up.

