

DAY 1 DRAMA

Characters: RUTH, ZANE, CJ, JUNGLE JIM, HARPER, CASSIE

(Theme music, then Background Jungle Sounds begin.)

(Scene begins as RUTH enters from the rear of the auditorium walking at a fast pace toward the stage. She's wearing a backpack and using a walking stick.)

RUTH: *(happy)* What a grand adventure this is going to be! Ever since we saw Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart in *The African Queen*, I've been wanting to go on a jungle river cruise. It was your grandfather's favorite movie, you know. *(becomes sentimental)* Oh, how I wish he could be here right now—don't you?

(realizes her grandson, ZANE, isn't behind her)

RUTH: *(puzzled)* Zane? Oh my . . . how embarrassing! I wonder how long I've been talking to myself. *(looks around, then yells)* Zane!

(ZANE enters, also wearing a backpack.)

RUTH: What's wrong, Sweetheart? Did something happen?

ZANE: *(out of breath)* No. I just found a pet, that's all. It's a baby chameleon! Want to hold him? *(holds out cupped hands as if holding a chameleon)*

(IMPORTANT NOTE: There is no chameleon [prop] here. ZANE is simply holding his hands in such a way that the audience thinks there is one.)

RUTH: I think you know the answer to that question, young man.

ZANE: You mean you still hate reptiles?

RUTH: Well, Honey, I don't think it's something you just outgrow—like one day you wake up and can't wait to hold a lizard.

ZANE: *(laughs)* Yeah, that would be weird.

RUTH: And another thing . . . I don't hate anything God created. Every plant and animal is an absolute masterpiece. In fact, all of creation declares God's glory.

ZANE: That's not what my teacher thinks.

RUTH: I know. It's sad. How anyone can think that it all just happened by chance is beyond me. It makes no sense, and it's not even good science.

ZANE: Yeah, and you oughta know. You taught science for like 70 years!

RUTH: 70? Now, c'mon. I may be old, but I'm not that old! It was 47 years.

ZANE: Sorry. Well, it's still a long time.

RUTH: No, what really bothers me is that they teach evolution and millions of years as if it's a fact. But it's not a fact at all. It's just a belief. Always remember that!

ZANE: Oh, you don't have to worry about me, Grandma. The Bible says, "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,*" so that's what I believe. And it makes way more sense, too!

RUTH: Good boy.

ZANE: *(holding up the chameleon)* Hey, you think it'd be okay to take him on the cruise?

RUTH: Uh . . . no.

ZANE: I knew you were going to say that. *(starts to set the chameleon down)*

RUTH: Ahem. *(clears her throat)* Over there, please. *(points to a spot far away)*

ZANE: Okay. *(stoops down to let it go)* Goodbye, little buddy. Maybe our paths will cross again sometime.

RUTH: *(to herself)* I sure hope not.

ZANE: What'd you say?

RUTH: Oh, nothing. *(starts walking)* Shall we move along?

ZANE: Sure. But can you walk a little slower? I'm having trouble keeping up.

RUTH: Oh, I'm sorry. I wasn't even paying attention. You know, at my age, time is precious—so you don't want to waste it, if you know what I mean.

ZANE: Well, I don't think you have anything to worry about, Grams. You're in better shape than I am!

RUTH: What? I am not.

ZANE: Much better, actually.

RUTH: Now, that's ridiculous!

ZANE: Oh yeah? Well, who beat me in the 40-yard dash last week?

RUTH: I'm sure you were just tired.

ZANE: And basketball the week before that . . . and arm wrestling the week before that!

RUTH: No, Honey, it was arm wrestling and then basketball. But why don't we change the subject?

ZANE: Good idea. *(reads the riverboat station sign)* Jungle Jim's River Expeditions. So, how'd you find this place?

RUTH: My silver sneakers fitness instructor told me about it. She's done this cruise several times. Says they're very professional and super friendly!

(CJ emerges from the front of the riverboat station holding a broom. He's clearly irritated.)

RUTH: *(to CJ with cheer)* Good morning!

CJ: *(cynical)* Maybe for you! *(as he walks past her and starts sweeping)*

RUTH: *(surprised)* Oh, dear.

ZANE: Hmm. Super friendly, huh? Are you sure this is the right place?

RUTH: *(she watches CJ sweep)* I'm sure. Poor thing. Why don't you see if you can cheer him up?

ZANE: What?

RUTH: Yeah, tell him one of those jokes you told me yesterday. The one about the sloth and the porcupine. I love that one!

ZANE: I'm not telling him any jokes.

RUTH: Then do one of your magic tricks.

ZANE: Grandma, I haven't done any magic tricks since I was six! Can we just get our tickets? You're embarrassing me!

RUTH: I know, Honey. I'm just getting you back for all those dirty diapers I had to change!

ZANE: *(with a smile)* Grandma!!

RUTH: C'mon. I'll race you to the door!

(RUTH and ZANE run into the station. CJ stops sweeping and starts talking to himself.)

CJ: *(frustrated)* I cannot believe this! I've been training to be a skipper for a solid year now, and look at me. I'm sweeping sidewalks. It's ridiculous; that's what it is!

(CJ resumes sweeping for a moment and then stops again.)

CJ: Hmm. You know, maybe this whole thing is a scam. A trick to get free work. We come here to be trained, and they give us chores to do, knowing the whole time we'll never get to captain a boat. Never! Well, guess what? I'm not gonna put up with it anymore! No siree! If this is how it's gonna be, I'll just quit!

Conner J. McGee III has got better things to do with his life than sweep sidewalks!

(JUNGLE JIM suddenly emerges from the station holding a large envelope.)

JUNGLE JIM: Hey, it's looking much better out here! Maybe you should be our sidewalk sweeper instead! What do you say?

CJ: *(not amused)* What?

JUNGLE JIM: *(laughs)* I'm just kidding.

CJ: *(trying to control his frustration)* Mr. Jim, we have to talk. It's very important.

JUNGLE JIM: Okay, but first, I want to give you this. *(hands CJ the envelope)*

CJ: What is it?

JUNGLE JIM: Open it. You'll see.

CJ: *(opens the envelope and reads)* Certificate of Graduation? "This certifies that Conner J. McGee III has completed his training and is hereby granted the title riverboat skipper with all the rights, responsibilities, and privileges appertaining thereto." Whatever that means.

JUNGLE JIM: Congratulations! *(reaches out to shake CJ's hand)* I would have given it to you a few weeks ago, but the forms were on back order and just came in this morning.

CJ: I can't believe it! I mean, I wasn't expecting it.

JUNGLE JIM: And see, that's what I like about you. You have such a great attitude. Someone else might have lost their patience by now and started grumbling and complaining or even quit. But not you. No, you've been a model student the entire time!

CJ: *(awkward)* I have?

JUNGLE JIM: Absolutely. Now what did you want to talk to me about?

CJ: Oh, uh, nothing. It's not important.

JUNGLE JIM: Are you sure?

CJ: Positive. *(changes the subject)* So, I'm really and truly a riverboat skipper?

JUNGLE JIM: It's official.

CJ: Wow! So, when do I start?

JUNGLE JIM: Right now.

CJ: What?

JUNGLE JIM: Yep. You've got a tour leaving in a few minutes.

CJ: Whoa! Then I better stop talking and finish this sweeping! (*picks up the broom, upside down at first, then flips it around and starts to sweep feverishly*)

JUNGLE JIM: CJ . . . (*louder*) CJ . . . (*walks over to CJ*) CJ!

CJ: What?

JUNGLE JIM: (*grabs the broom*) Forget the sweeping! You've got a trip to get ready for!

CJ: Oh, right.

(*Excited, CJ runs away from the station.*)

JUNGLE JIM: Uh, wrong way.

(*CJ reverses course and runs toward the station.*)

CJ: Oops. This is going to be AWESOME!

(*As soon as he enters the station, a Big Crash [sfx] is heard.*)

CJ: (*from backstage*) I'm okay!

JUNGLE JIM: (*to himself*) You better be, 'cause you're the only skipper I've got right now.

(*JUNGLE JIM sets the broom aside as RUTH and ZANE emerge from the front of the station.*)

RUTH: (*sees JUNGLE JIM*) Oh, hi. So, how soon 'til we leave?

JUNGLE JIM: Not long. We're just waiting for the other party to arrive. It'll be a small group this time—just four of you—and a skipper, of course.

RUTH: Sounds wonderful. It's gonna be a great week!

JUNGLE JIM: And warm, too! (*wipes sweat from his forehead*)

(*HARPER and CASSIE enter from the side of the auditorium and proceed toward the stage. HARPER struggles as she's carrying two duffle bags. CASSIE is carrying nothing but her smartphone.*)

ZANE: Yeah, I wish I could swim right now!

JUNGLE JIM: (*laughs*) And so do the crocodiles!

ZANE: Oh . . . right.

JUNGLE JIM: (*sees HARPER and CASSIE approaching*) Ah, here they come.

HARPER: (*annoyed*) C'mon, Cassie. Put the phone away and enjoy the scenery!

CASSIE: (*with earbuds in*) What?

HARPER: (*frustrated*) I said, put the—oh, never mind.

JUNGLE JIM: Welcome to Jungle Jim's. Mrs. Allen, I presume?

HARPER: That's right, and my daughter, Cassie. (*relieved as she puts the duffle bags down*)

CASSIE: (*to JUNGLE JIM*) You know, you have lousy cell service here. My phone's been going in and out all afternoon.

HARPER: (*embarrassed*) Cassie!

(*ZANE and RUTH exchange glances.*)

JUNGLE JIM: It's okay. But, I hate to say, it's going to get a whole lot worse before it gets better.

CASSIE: (*laughs, thinking he's kidding, then realizes he isn't*) Ha! What? (*looks at HARPER*) He's joking, right? Please tell me he's joking.

HARPER: I'm afraid not, Sweetheart.

JUNGLE JIM: Sorry, but we haven't equipped the jungle with cell towers yet.

CASSIE: Seriously? And I'm just finding this out now? (*turns to HARPER*) So, what am I supposed to do? My phone will be useless! (*short pause*) I need a moment. (*turns away and takes a deep breath, trying to cope with the bad news*)

HARPER: (*rolls her eyes, then looks at JUNGLE JIM*) Sorry we're late.

JUNGLE JIM: No worries; we're still on time. Here are your tickets. (*hands her the tickets*) Oh, and let me introduce you to Ruth and Zane. You'll all be riding together.

(*As they all greet each other, CJ enters wearing a large backpack with stuff hanging off of it.*)

CJ: (*to JUNGLE JIM, out of breath and excited*) All right, I'm ready!

JUNGLE JIM: Good! (*looks at his watch*) Okay, everyone, now that we're all here, it's time to board. But before we do, I just want to welcome you again to Jungle Jim's River Expeditions! We're one of the longest-running riverboat expedition companies in the world, so you can relax knowing that you're in excellent hands. And this is your skipper, CJ McGee. He recently graduated from our training academy with high grades, and we're very proud of him!

CJ: (*whispers discreetly to JUNGLE JIM*) Recently? How 'bout, five minutes ago!

JUNGLE JIM: (*quickly changes the subject*) Uh, anyway, CJ has a few words he'd like to say.

CJ: (*caught off-guard*) I do?

JUNGLE JIM: (*firmly*) Yes, you do.

CJ: Okay. (*clears his throat*) Uh, well hello, everyone. My name is Conner J. McGee III. My friends call me "CJ" but you can call me "Skipper" or "Skipper McGee." Anyhow, I'm really looking forward to a great week

together. And, as long as we don't encounter any giant whirlpools, monster anacondas, or man-eating crocs, it's gonna be lots of fun!

HARPER: Is he serious?

JUNGLE JIM: *(clears throat as he elbows CJ)* No, of course not. He was just kidding. Weren't you, CJ?

CJ: Kidding? Oh, uh yeah, that was a joke. I love jokes. Wanna hear a joke about paper?

CASSIE: No, thank you.

CJ: That's okay, it's tearable. *(laughs)* Or I could tell you a joke about pizza, but it's pretty cheesy.

JUNGLE JIM: *(interrupts to prevent another bad joke)*
So, moving right along . . . as we head to the boat, are there any last-minute questions?

(EVERYONE starts toward the boat.)

CASSIE: *(looking at CJ)* Yeah, can I get some earplugs?

CJ: *(laughs)* Didn't like those jokes, huh? Well, don't worry, I've got others—and they're even funnier!

CASSIE: Thanks for the warning.

JUNGLE JIM: Have a wonderful time, everyone!

(After the last person exits, JUNGLE JIM stops CJ.)

JUNGLE JIM: Now remember, this is your first solo, so be careful. The jungle is wild and can be very unfriendly at times.

CJ: *(overconfident)* No worries. I got this. *(gets in the boat, starts the Engine [sfx] and addresses the passengers with intercom effect)* "Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Again, my name is Skipper McGee and on behalf of Jungle Jim's River Expeditions, it is my pleasure to welcome you aboard the River Belle as we cruise through the Tropics of Combo . . ."

(The boat moves away from the dock and disappears behind the station.)

(Theme music)

DAY 2 DRAMA

Characters: CJ, HARPER, CASSIE, ZANE, RUTH

(Theme music, then Background Jungle Sounds [sfx] begin.)

(Scene begins with the sound of the Boat Arriving [sfx] at the dock of the first checkpoint. NOTE: The riverboat station has been transformed into an outpost for Days 2, 3, and 4. See Set Design & Construction for more information.)

CJ: *(with intercom effect)* And now, ladies and gentlemen, as we arrive at our first outpost, the river portion of today's expedition is concluded. If you've enjoyed the trip so far, you may exit the left side *(dock side)* of the boat. If you haven't enjoyed it, you may exit on the right side *(river side)*!

(All laugh, then EVERYONE, except RUTH, emerges from the boat.)

HARPER: *(to CASSIE)* C'mon, let's do some exploring!

CASSIE: I'm hot. I'd rather go swimming.

CJ: I wouldn't recommend it.

CASSIE: Why not?

CJ: Well, let me just say, if the piranhas don't get you, the crocs will . . . and if the crocs don't get you, the electric eels will . . . and if the electric eels don't get you, the snakes will . . . and—

CASSIE: *(interrupts)* Okay! I get the point—no swimming.

ZANE: *(drops to hands and knees)* Hey look! A trail of leafcutter ants! I just read about them in my jungle book. See how they carry pieces of leaf on their backs?

HARPER: Oh, wow. That is so cool! Hey, Cassie, come look at this. *(snaps some photos)*

CASSIE: *(unmoved)* Nah, I'm good. I hate bugs, remember?

CJ: *(joins ZANE, looking down at the ants)* And what's amazing is they're one of the strongest creatures on earth. They can carry up to 50 times their body weight! If you do the math, it'd be like one of us carrying a minivan with our mouth!

ZANE: *(laughs)* Wow!

HARPER: That's incredible!

ZANE: *(to CJ)* Hey, do you think we'll see any Hercules beetles?

CJ: Oh, yeah, for sure. The jungle's "crawling" with them. *(laughs)* Get it?

CASSIE: *(pretends to laugh)* Hardy . . . har . . . har.

HARPER: What's a Hercules beetle?

ZANE: It's a gigantic black bug with a big nasty claw on the front.

CJ: It's actually a horn, if you want to get technical about it.

HARPER: So, how big is it?

CJ: Well, let's just say it's one of the world's largest insects. And that's saying something considering we're in a place with spiders as big as dinner plates!

CASSIE: Whaaat?

CJ: Yeah, in fact, they even made a movie about it—*(very dramatic as though he's advertising a movie)* "The Hercules beetle that ate New York City—it came from nowhere! It came from everywhere!"

CASSIE: Stop it. You're creeping me out!

HARPER: Honey, he's just teasing.

CJ: *(to HARPER)* No, seriously, they're about that big. *(holds up his fingers 6" apart)*

CASSIE: Eeeuww!

CJ: And speaking of bugs, did you know that over 90% of the animal species in the jungle are insects and that within a square mile there could be over 50,000 different species? So, you know what that means? They're literally EVERYWHERE!

CASSIE: Gross! Can we pleeeeeease change the subject?

ZANE: Oh, wow! Look at that frog!

HARPER: It's so tiny and colorful. *(snaps some photos of it)*

ZANE: I wonder if he'll let me hold him? *(starts to reach for it)*

CJ: NO, ZANE! STOP! Don't touch it! It's a poison dart frog. Very beautiful, but VERY deadly!

HARPER: Really? *(takes a step back)*

ZANE: *(unnerved, he slowly steps away)* You know, I think I've got enough pets.

CJ: Yeah, and the golden ones are the worst. In fact, one gold frog has enough poison to kill 20,000 mice!

CASSIE: All right, that's it. I've seen enough. I'm going back to the boat. *(starts to walk away)* And don't try to stop me!

(CASSIE exits.)

ZANE: I think it's gonna be a long week for her.

CJ: Then I'm gonna do all I can to make this her best trip ever!

HARPER: I hope you're up for a challenge.

CJ: In the meantime, we need to unload the supplies for tonight. Zane, you want to lend a hand?

ZANE: Sure.

(CJ and ZANE exit to the boat. Soon, HARPER hears some Rustling [sfx] in the woods.)

HARPER: *(anxious)* Hello? *(pause)* Is anybody there?

(More Rustling [sfx] sounds are heard.)

HARPER: CJ? Zane? If you're trying to be funny, it's definitely not working! Anybody? *(pause)* Oh, please don't be a tiger or a bear! Are there bears in the jungle? *(hides around the corner of the outpost building)*

(Then a Hearing Aid Squeal [sfx] is heard.)

HARPER: What is that sound?

(RUTH emerges from behind the greenery at the far end of the stage.)

HARPER: Ruth? *(comes out of hiding)*

RUTH: *(adjusting her hearing aid, she turns and sees HARPER)* Hello . . .

HARPER: What were you doing in the woods?

RUTH: Oh . . . well, you see my hearing aid went out just as we were arriving and while I was changing the battery, I saw this adorable little sloth hanging way up in a tree. Did you know sloths spend 90% of their lives hanging upside down?

HARPER: I had no idea.

RUTH: God is so creative! So, anyway, I was curious and just had to climb up to get a closer look.

HARPER: *(surprised)* Wait, you climbed a tree?

RUTH: Well, sure! I love climbing. And it wasn't that high, really, maybe . . . I don't know . . . 60 feet or so?

HARPER: *(shocked)* 60 feet?

RUTH: Yeah, give or take. That's why I was in the woods. Where is everyone?

HARPER: Uh, Cassie went back to the boat, and the guys went to get supplies.

RUTH: I see. So, are you having a good time?

HARPER: Yes. But Cassie would rather be at home, which makes it hard to have fun.

RUTH: That's too bad.

HARPER: Zane seems like a good kid.

RUTH: Oh, he is, and I love him to pieces.

HARPER: Yeah, you two seem very close.

RUTH: We are, especially since my husband passed away. He and Zane had such a special relationship. And now I'm trying to fill that empty space as best I can.

HARPER: That's awesome. I'm sure you're a great grandma. I mean a wonderful grandma! Sorry.

(Both HARPER and RUTH laugh.)

HARPER: *(changes the subject)* Hey, can I ask you a question? I can tell you're a religious person.

RUTH: Well, I'm a believer in Jesus Christ if that's what you mean.

HARPER: Yeah, I guess that's what I meant. Anyway, there's something I've been thinking about lately, and maybe you can explain it.

RUTH: I'll try my best.

HARPER: So, you believe there's a loving God, right?

RUTH: I sure do.

HARPER: And you believe that he can do anything?

RUTH: No doubt about it.

HARPER: Then tell me why a loving God who can do anything allows bad things to happen. I don't get it. I just don't.

RUTH: That's a good question, and that's why I love my Bible. I like to call it the "history book of the universe" because it tells us why things are the way they are. Are you familiar with God's Word?

HARPER: A little . . . I mean, we went to church when I was young.

RUTH: Okay, so the Bible tells us that way back in the beginning, when God created the world, everything was perfect. Nothing bad ever happened.

HARPER: That's so hard to imagine.

RUTH: I know. Sadly, it wasn't like that for very long.

HARPER: Ah, the story of Adam and Eve?

RUTH: Yes, but remember—it's not just a story. They were real people in a real place. Do you remember what happened?

HARPER: God gave them everything except the fruit from that one tree?

RUTH: Very good. And he warned them not to eat it and told them what would happen if they did. Then the serpent lied to Eve, and they chose to believe the serpent rather than God. And they ate the fruit!

HARPER: I don't understand. What does that have to do with all the bad things that happen now?

RUTH: When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, things changed immediately. Sin and death entered the world like a curse, and it affected everyone and everything. In fact, it eventually got so bad and so evil that God sent a global flood—the biggest catastrophe ever—and only eight people and a bunch of animals survived.

HARPER: Noah's ark?

RUTH: Yes. But the curse remained. That's why there's still so much evil in the world and why there's disease and death and earthquakes and tornadoes and poisonous snakes. You get the idea.

HARPER: So all this time, we've been living under a curse?

RUTH: Yes, but the good news is that it won't always be like this. God has promised to remove the curse someday. We just don't know when. Could be soon, though!

(CJ and ZANE enter carrying duffles and supplies.)

HARPER: Oh, good, you're back. Is Cassie with you?

(CASSIE enters carrying a long tube on her shoulders. She takes her place standing between, but a little behind, CJ and ZANE.)

CASSIE: *(unenthused)* Yes, I'm here, unfortunately.

HARPER: Well it's good to see you helping, at least.

CASSIE: It wasn't my idea.

CJ: That's not true.

CASSIE: Yes, it is! *(as she turns toward CJ, the tube she's holding clobbers ZANE)*

ZANE: Ow!

CASSIE: Oh, sorry. *(she instinctively turns toward ZANE, and the tube hits CJ)*

CJ: Ow! Here, let's put the fishing poles down, shall we? *(grabs the tube)*

CASSIE: Hey, it's not my fault! You made me carry it!

CJ: Did not. All I said was, "If you don't work, you don't eat." It was your choice.

CASSIE: Humph, some choice.

CJ: *(looks at the sky)* It's gonna be dark soon, so we need to get situated. We can probably all fit in the outpost here or *(as he points)* there's a tree house just down the path that'll sleep four people. Take your pick.

RUTH: *(enthusiastically)* We'll take the tree house!

CJ: *(surprised)* You sure? You'll have to climb a ladder to get to it.

RUTH: Oh, I hope so! That's the best part!

CJ: *(tries to discourage her)* It's pretty high.

RUTH: Hey, the higher the better, I always say!

CJ: I don't know . . . I fell off a 30-foot ladder once.

RUTH: Oh, no! Were you okay?

CJ: Yes. Thankfully, I was only on the bottom rung when it happened, but still . . .

ZANE: Well, you don't have to worry about Grams. She'll be just fine.

(RUTH and ZANE exit toward the tree house.)

CJ: *(calling after them)* All right, but if you fall and break your legs, don't come running to me! *(turns to HARPER)* And what about you two?

CASSIE: *(peeks in the door of the outpost and doesn't like what she sees or smells)* We'll sleep on the boat.

CJ: Sorry, not an option. Company rules.

CASSIE: Well, I'm not sleeping in there! That's for sure!

HARPER: *(annoyed, thinks CASSIE is just being difficult)* Why? What's wrong with it? *(as she takes a look herself)* Uh, yeah, we'll take the tree house, too.

CJ: Oh, c'mon, it can't be that bad. *(looks inside, then squeezes his nose)*

CASSIE: *(smugly)* Sorry, the tree house is full.

CJ: Fine. I'll sleep here. Go ahead and take your stuff to the tree house, and I'll get dinner started.

HARPER: What's on the menu?

CASSIE: Better not be fish. That's all I can say.

CJ: Don't worry. There won't be any fish on the menu as long as I'm skipper. Last time I went to a seafood restaurant, I slipped and pulled a mussel, and it made me really crabby! *(laughs at his own joke)*

HARPER: Wow! That's really shellfish of you!

CASSIE: Mom! Don't encourage him!

(Then Thunder Clap 1 [sfx] is heard.)

HARPER: Quick, let's go before we get wet!

(HARPER and CASSIE quickly grab their bags and exit toward the tree house as Thunder Clap 2 [sfx] is heard.)

CJ: *(looking up into the sky)* Hmm . . . hope it doesn't spoil our snipe hunt!

(Theme music)

DAY 3 DRAMA

Characters: CJ, HARPER, ZANE, CASSIE, RUTH

(Theme music, then Background Jungle Sounds [sfx] begin.)

(Scene begins with CJ emerging from the outpost building. He yawns and stretches, then proceeds to brush his teeth.)

CJ: *(talks to himself)* Boy, that was some storm last night. Better check things over. *(he looks at the building)* That's good; everything looks intact. Nothing damaged. Nothing missing. Yay for us! *(short pause)* Why am I talking to myself? Oh, well. *(looks at his watch)* Wow, is it really that late?

(CJ dashes back into the outpost, grabs an alarm clock, comes back out and sets it on a camp chair in front of the building. Then a loud Reveille Alarm [sfx] is heard.)

CJ: *(laughs)* That should wake them up!

(HARPER and ZANE enter on the trail from the tree house.)

HARPER: *(a bit annoyed)* Just so you know, in case you're interested, the smell of bacon is way more pleasing to wake up to than "Reveille." *(pronounced "Rev-e-lee")*

CJ: I'll make a note of that.

HARPER: So, did the storm keep you awake last night?

ZANE: Not me. I slept like a log.

CJ: Yeah, I used to do that, but then I'd always wake up in the fireplace.

ZANE: *(laughs)* That was funny. I've gotta remember that one.

CJ: No, really—I slept great. I always do. In fact, I'm so good at it I can do it with my eyes closed!

HARPER: *(laughs)* Wow, you're on a roll, aren't you?

CJ: Yeah, but don't call me "butter."

(There's a pause as HARPER and ZANE don't say anything. They just look at each other.)

CJ: Sorry, that was bad. But, seriously, we need to get moving, or we won't make it to the next stop before sunset. Where are the others?

HARPER: Cassie's still sleeping, and I'm not sure where Ruth is. She got up a long time ago.

ZANE: She's taking her morning walk.

CJ: In the jungle?

ZANE: Oh yeah, nothing stops her. Not rain, snow, sleet, wind, hail, freezing cold, or blazing hot. She never misses a day.

HARPER: No wonder she's in such great shape.

CJ: *(concerned)* Yeah, but the jungle is not a safe place to be wandering around. We need to find her. And besides, Jungle Jim hates it when we don't return with the same number of passengers we left with; it really hurts our ratings.

HARPER: Uh, yeah . . . as it should. *(short pause)* So should we split up?

CJ: Yes, good idea. You go that way. *(he points)* Zane, you go that way. *(points in a different direction)* I'll go this way, *(pointing a third direction)* and we'll meet back here in, say, 10 minutes?

(Just then, RUTH emerges from the woods.)

RUTH: Who are you looking for?

ZANE: Grams! You're okay!

RUTH: Well, of course I'm okay. Why wouldn't I be?

CJ: We were just concerned, that's all.

ZANE: I told him you never missed your morning walk . . . no matter what!

RUTH: That's right. When it comes to exercise, you can't let anything stop you. Consistency is the key! *(looks at her watch)* Hmm, nine miles—not too shabby.

HARPER: *(amazed)* You walked nine miles this morning?

RUTH: Yes. I coulda kept going, but thought I should get back. Didn't want to miss the boat, you know!

HARPER: You're amazing.

RUTH: The going was rough, though. There were lots of trees down not far from here. That storm must have been something!

CJ: Yeah, but no damage to report here, thankfully! *(CASSIE enters half asleep and wrapped in a blanket.)*

HARPER: Good morning, Cassie!

CASSIE: What's for breakfast? I'm starving.

CJ: Well, there's good news and bad news. The good news is we are having breakfast.

ZANE: And the bad news?

CJ: It's gonna have to wait until lunch.

CASSIE: What?

CJ: (*looks at watch*) If we don't shove off right away, we're not going to make it to the next stop before dark. Today's a long day on the river, and we're getting a late start.

CASSIE: And whose fault is that?

HARPER: Cassie.

CJ: I know. It's my fault. But I'm gonna make it up to you. I promise. In fact, by the time this expedition is over, you're all gonna give me five stars.

CASSIE: (*cynical*) Ha! That's unlikely.

RUTH: All righty, then. It's time to pack up!

ZANE: I'll start carrying things to the boat.

(*As RUTH exits toward the tree house, ZANE grabs some supplies and exits toward where the boat was.*)

HARPER: C'mon, Cassie. Let's get our stuff.

CASSIE: But I'm hungry now!

CJ: Wait a second.

(*CJ steps into the outpost, grabs an apple and hands it to CASSIE.*)

CJ: Here you go. This'll tide you over.

CASSIE: An apple?

CJ: (*with a smile*) Remember . . . five stars.

CASSIE: Are you kidding? It's gonna take a lot more than that!

(*As HARPER and CASSIE exit toward the tree house, CJ starts packing things up.*)

CJ: All right, let's get this show on the road!

(*As CJ enters the outpost, ZANE returns still carrying the things he left with.*)

ZANE: Uh, Skipper McGee?

(*CJ emerges from the outpost with a duffle.*)

CJ: Oh, good, you're back. Here, this is ready to go. (*notices that ZANE is still holding the things he left with*) Wait. Why are you still holding that? You were supposed to put it on the boat.

(*The conversation continues as CJ is distracted with packing things up.*)

ZANE: I couldn't find it.

CJ: You couldn't find it?

ZANE: That's right.

CJ: What do you mean, you couldn't find it?

ZANE: I couldn't find the boat.

CJ: I don't understand.

ZANE: It wasn't there.

CJ: What wasn't there?

ZANE: The boat.

CJ: The boat wasn't there?

ZANE: That's right.

CJ: (*suddenly focuses*) Wait. Did you just say the boat wasn't there? Our boat?

ZANE: Yes! That's what I'm trying to tell you. Did you move it?

(*CJ runs to where the boat was docked.*)

CJ: Move it? Of course, I didn't move it! It should be right . . . (*sees that the boat is missing*) Uh-oh! Where'd it go?

(*Then CJ sees the rope that was anchoring the boat to the dock. He pulls it up from the water to find a badly frayed end.*)

CJ: (*distressed*) I can't believe it. This is bad. This is really, REALLY bad! (*pauses, then scolds himself*) You know, most people lose the TV remote or maybe their keys or their wallet. But me? No, not Conner J. McGee III. When he loses something, he loses something big—like a \$500,000 riverboat! How am I going to explain this to my boss?

ZANE: I'm sure he'll understand. He seemed like a nice man.

CJ: Oh sure, no problem. "Uh, Mr. Jim, you haven't seen my boat lately, have you? I seem to have misplaced it." (*then imitates a lighthearted JUNGLE JIM*) "Nope, haven't seen it, just take another one."

ZANE: But it wasn't your fault. I'm sure the storm washed it away.

CJ: Well, whether it did or didn't, we still don't have a boat!

ZANE: So, what do we do now?

CJ: I've gotta go look for it. Hopefully, it's not far downstream. (*starts to walk away*) I can't believe it! Everything was going so well and now this! (*CJ exits.*)

ZANE: (*to himself*) Something tells me we're going to be here for a while.

(*RUTH, HARPER, and CASSIE enter carrying their things.*)

RUTH: Is everyone ready for an exciting day?
I sure am!

ZANE: Well, I don't think "exciting" is the right word. "Interesting" perhaps, or maybe "challenging" would be better.

RUTH: Why? Is something wrong?

CASSIE: (*negative*) Oh, great, here it comes. There's no lunch either.

ZANE: Uh, it's worse than that, I'm afraid. (*pause*) The boat's gone.

HARPER: What?

CASSIE: Perfect! So, the skipper took off and left us here to die. Wow! That five-star promise didn't last very long!

ZANE: No, we think the boat was washed away in the storm last night. He went to look for it.

RUTH: Then there's only one thing to do right now . . . pray!

ZANE: Good idea.

RUTH: (*prays*) Dear Lord, we know that you're in control of everything and that we're not alone right now. You have the power to protect us and rescue us. Give us wisdom and help us not to be afraid. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

CASSIE: (*irritated*) So what are we supposed to do now?

HARPER: Just wait, I guess. What else can we do?

CASSIE: I can't believe this! I could be at home with my friends right now, but no . . . instead, I'm stuck in the middle of a jungle waiting for some animal to eat me!

ZANE: I'm gonna collect some firewood.

HARPER: Good idea. Cassie, why don't you help him?
(*ZANE exits.*)

CASSIE: I'm busy.

HARPER: Doing what?

CASSIE: Waiting. (*pause*) Oh, all right.

HARPER: Just don't go too far, okay?

(*As CASSIE exits, HARPER sits down on a nearby chair.*)

RUTH: (*to HARPER, upbeat and positive*) Don't worry. Everything's gonna work out. You'll see.

HARPER: You really think so?

RUTH: I do—one way or another.

HARPER: I hope you're right.

(*RUTH opens her backpack and pulls out a couple of bananas.*)

RUTH: Maybe these will take our minds off the situation.

HARPER: Oh, I love bananas!

RUTH: I picked them on my walk this morning. (*hands one to HARPER*)

HARPER: Thanks!

RUTH: (*takes a bite*) Mmm, they're so good. (*sits on a chair*)

HARPER: Much better than the grocery store bananas.

RUTH: We'll have to pick some more.

(*A moment of silence as they eat their bananas.*)

HARPER: You know, I've been thinking about our talk yesterday.

RUTH: Glad to hear it.

HARPER: You really believe we all came from Adam and Eve?

RUTH: Well, that's what the Bible teaches, so yes, I do.

HARPER: Then how do you explain all the different races and cultures around the world?

RUTH: That's easy. Remember the tower of Babel in Genesis? Where God stopped the people from building by confusing their speech?

HARPER: Yes, I remember. And that may be why we have different languages, but it doesn't explain why we look so different.

RUTH: Actually, it does. You see, when people couldn't understand each other anymore, they separated into smaller family groups that spoke the same language and scattered all over the earth. Now, if you know anything about genetics, you can easily explain how physical differences, like hair color, eye shape, and skin shades were passed down to their children in these groups. Which is exactly what happened after the tower of Babel.

HARPER: How do you know so much about genetics?

RUTH: I taught high school science for 47 years.

HARPER: (*impressed*) Really?

RUTH: So, you see, there may be many people groups, but there's only one race—the human race.

(*ZANE and CASSIE return. ZANE has an armload of firewood, while CASSIE has only one stick. ZANE sets his load down.*)

CASSIE: (*sarcastic*) Well, you'll be happy to know I learned something today.

HARPER: Oh? What's that, Sweetheart?

CASSIE: I hate camping! (*tosses her stick onto the pile of wood*)

(CJ enters.)

ZANE: Oh, here comes CJ. I hope he has good news.

(EVERYONE turns and looks in the direction of CJ.)

RUTH: *(cheerfully)* What's the word, Skipper?

CJ: *(discouraged)* Well, the bad news is the boat's gone, our food's gone, most of our supplies are gone, and

we're stuck here until someone rescues us. But who knows when that'll be because the radio's gone, too.

ZANE: Bummer.

HARPER: And the good news?

CJ: There isn't any good news.

(Then a scary Indian Wolf Howl [sfx] is heard.)

(Theme music)

DAY 4 DRAMA

Characters: ZANE, CASSIE, CJ, RUTH, HARPER, JUNGLE JIM

(Theme music, then Background Jungle Sounds [sfx].)

(Scene begins with ZANE sitting on a camp chair in front of a campfire, reading a book. After a moment, he notices that the fire has gone out.)

ZANE: Looks like the fire needs some attention.

(ZANE gets up to attend to the fire. While he's focused and kneeling in front of the fire, CASSIE enters with her journal, grabs ZANE'S chair for herself, not knowing that ZANE had been using it, repositions it, then sits down near the fire.)

ZANE: Oh, hi.

CASSIE: *(flat)* Hello.

ZANE: Is that a journal?

CASSIE: Yeah. My mom makes me keep one. She says it's a good way to develop my writing skills for college someday.

ZANE: That makes sense. I should do that, too.

CASSIE: I'm trying to think of a word that best describes this trip.

ZANE: Hmm. How 'bout . . . memorable?

CASSIE: Memorable? Are you serious?

ZANE: Yeah, why not? You're never gonna forget it, that's for sure!

CASSIE: I was thinking more along the lines of awful or terrible or dreadful or . . . horrific!

ZANE: But that's so negative.

CASSIE: How can it not be negative? We've been stranded here for like five days now with no end in sight!

ZANE: It's only been two and a half.

CASSIE: Well, it sure seems like five!

ZANE: Just try not to think about it.

CASSIE: Yeah, right!

ZANE: It's working for me—at least better than this fire right now.

(ZANE gives up on the fire and backs up to sit on the chair that was there, falling backward onto the ground or a pile of duffle bags.)

ZANE: Ahhhh!!

CASSIE: Are you okay?

ZANE: Yeah, I think so. *(he gets up)* Did you take my chair?

CASSIE: What? I don't know, did I?

ZANE: Never mind. It's okay.

(ZANE brushes himself off, gets another chair from near the outpost, and sits down to read.)

CASSIE: What are you reading?

ZANE: *The Swiss Family Robinson.*

CASSIE: Never heard of it.

ZANE: Seriously? You've never heard of *The Swiss Family Robinson*?

CASSIE: *(defensive)* No. So what?

ZANE: Well, it just happens to be one of the best stories ever written.

CASSIE: Is that so?

ZANE: Yes, it's a classic!

CASSIE: May I see it?

ZANE: Sure.

(ZANE stands, hands CASSIE his book, and remains standing.)

CASSIE: And this helps keep your mind off our situation?

ZANE: *(enthusiastic)* Oh, yeah! You can read it after I'm done if you want.

CASSIE: What's it about?

ZANE: Oh, it's full of adventure! A family gets swept off course by a raging storm, then they lose their boat and end up stranded on a deserted island for like 10 years!

(CJ enters and grabs the chair that ZANE just positioned for himself, moves it over, and sits in front of the fire.)

CASSIE: Kinda like what we're experiencing right now?

ZANE: What? Oh yeah, maybe.

CASSIE: No, thank you! *(tosses the book back to ZANE)*

ZANE: *(deflated)* Okay.

(ZANE again backs up to sit on the chair that he thought was there, falling backward onto the ground or a pile of duffle bags.)

ZANE: Ahhhh!!

CASSIE: Zane! You did it again!

CJ: Are you okay?

ZANE: *(embarrassed)* I think I'll go fishing.

(ZANE exits.)

CJ: That was weird.

CASSIE: Not really. You took his chair.

CJ: I did? Oops. *(yells to ZANE)* Sorry! *(turns to CASSIE)* So, what are you doing?

CASSIE: *(sarcastic)* Oh, I'm just recording all these precious experiences we're having. I want to remember all the details so when I'm old, I can tell my grandchildren what a horrible time I had in the jungle! No offense, of course.

CJ: *(offended)* Look, I know I'm a terrible skipper, *(gets up from his chair)* and I'm sorry you've had me as your guide! But you could be a little nicer, though!

(CJ exits in the same direction that ZANE did as RUTH enters.)

RUTH: Is he all right?

CASSIE: *(unfeeling)* Who knows?

RUTH: May I sit down?

CASSIE: Sure, if you want to.

RUTH: You know, for what it's worth, I don't think it's his fault that we're in this situation. It really could have happened to anyone.

CASSIE: I suppose. But it doesn't change the fact that we're stuck in the jungle, and I don't want to be here!

(CASSIE's Stomach Growls [sfx].)

CASSIE: Did you hear that?

RUTH: I did. I'm hungry too.

CASSIE: *(discouraged)* Honestly, I don't know how much longer I can stand this!

RUTH: It is bad—there's no doubt about that.

CASSIE: *(surprised)* Wait, you think so too?

RUTH: Well, sure. Why?

CASSIE: Because you always seem so happy. I can't figure it out.

RUTH: Well, the truth is I'm not always happy, but I am thankful.

CASSIE: How can you possibly be thankful in a situation like this? It's miserable!

RUTH: It's not easy; believe me. But then I remind myself that no one has ever endured as much as my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

CASSIE: Huh? What do you mean?

RUTH: Think about it. The Creator of the universe took on the limitations of a human body, was born in a small town, and laid in a feeding trough for animals! Then he lived on this earth for 30-some years, got tired and hungry and suffered pain and sadness, just like we do. Then, after all the wonderful things he did, he was crucified—even though he was completely and totally innocent!

CASSIE: Wow.

RUTH: So this situation right here is nothing compared to what he went through.

CASSIE: I see what you mean.

RUTH: Cassie, do you think you're good enough to go to heaven when you die?

CASSIE: I think so. I mean . . . I'm better than a lot of my friends.

RUTH: I used to think I was good enough, too. But then a friend showed me from the Bible that I was wrong. I wasn't good enough. In fact, nobody is.

CASSIE: Nobody? The Bible actually says that?

RUTH: It sure does. It says we've ALL disobeyed God's commands over and over, and there's nothing WE can do to make it right.

CASSIE: Well, that sounds hopeless.

RUTH: Yes, but it isn't! And that's why I'm so thankful! God made a way for us to be forgiven of all our sins! Do you know what he did?

CASSIE: Umm. No.

RUTH: He sent Jesus! That's why he came! You see, when Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead, he paid the penalty for OUR sin so we could be with him in heaven someday. It was like a grand rescue mission!

CASSIE: *(confused)* Wait. Do you mean we're ALL going to heaven?

RUTH: No, only those who believe in Jesus and are in God's forever family. Are you in God's family?

CASSIE: I don't know.

RUTH: Would you like to know?

CASSIE: I don't feel like I'm ready.

RUTH: You know, you don't have to get your act together to come to him. You just need to come.

CASSIE: Umm, maybe some other time.

RUTH: You really shouldn't put it off. No one's guaranteed tomorrow.

CASSIE: I understand. *(stands up)* But right now, I just need to clear my head.

RUTH: Okay, Honey.

(CASSIE exits in the same direction that ZANE and CJ did.)

RUTH: Dear Lord, thank you that I was able to share the good news with Cassie. Please soften her heart and help her to see how much she needs you. Amen. *(to herself with glee)* Oh, how I LOVE talking about Jesus!

(HARPER enters carrying a Bible.)

HARPER: Where is everyone?

RUTH: Oh, hello! Well, Cassie just went that way. *(points)* And I'm not sure about the others. Were you napping?

HARPER: *(excited)* No, I was reading the Bible.

RUTH: You were? That whole time?

HARPER: Yes. I must have read for three solid hours! Here you go. *(tries to hand the Bible to RUTH)* I really appreciate you lending it to me.

RUTH: No, no, I want you to have it.

HARPER: But it's your Bible.

RUTH: I always have two with me, one to keep and one to give away. So, it's yours now.

HARPER: Oh, that's so kind of you.

RUTH: So, did you read the book of John?

HARPER: I did. And Acts and Romans, too!

RUTH: Wow . . . that's a big dose of theology! So, what'd you think?

HARPER: *(smiling)* What'd I think? I think I'm a believer now, just like you!

RUTH: *(excited)* What?

HARPER: I really do believe Jesus is God and the only Savior of the world. I believe he died for me and rose from the dead. And I believe that I'm forgiven and will be with Jesus in heaven someday!

(The sound of a Boat Approaching [sfx] is heard.)

RUTH: That's amazing! I was just praying that God would rescue Cassie, and here he was rescuing you!

HARPER: Oh! And guess what?

RUTH: What?

HARPER: He's not done rescuing! I hear a boat!

RUTH: A boat? Oh, I hear it too! Thank you, Lord!

(HARPER and RUTH run to the river as JUNGLE JIM's boat comes into view. JUNGLE JIM quickly exits the boat carrying a large cooler.)

HARPER: Boy, are we glad to see you!

JUNGLE JIM: And I'm glad I found you! Is everyone all right?

HARPER: Yes, we're all fine.

JUNGLE JIM: But hungry, I'm sure. I brought some food and drinks.

(JUNGLE JIM opens the cooler, and RUTH and HARPER help themselves.)

HARPER: Thank you.

RUTH: Yes! You're an answer to prayer; that's what you are!

JUNGLE JIM: Well, when CJ didn't check in to the second stop, I knew something was wrong. And I would have gotten here sooner but the river was blocked by fallen trees from the storm. So, where's your boat?

(Not knowing how JUNGLE JIM will react, HARPER and RUTH look at each other.)

HARPER: Uh, well . . .

RUTH: It was lost in the storm.

HARPER: Yeah, and Skipper McGee feels terrible about it.

JUNGLE JIM: Well . . . I'm just glad you're all safe. That's the important thing. Where is CJ, by the way?

(CASSIE bursts onto the stage. She's hysterical and out of breath.)

CASSIE: Somebody help!

JUNGLE JIM: What's wrong?

CASSIE: It's the skipper. He's wrestling a crocodile!

JUNGLE JIM: A crocodile?!

HARPER: Oh no!

(JUNGLE JIM runs offstage in same direction CASSIE came from and EVERYONE follows.)

(Theme music)

DAY 5 DRAMA

Characters: ZANE, CASSIE, CJ, RUTH, HARPER, JUNGLE JIM

(Theme music, then Background Jungle Sounds [sfx] begin.)

(Back at the riverboat station, with their backpacks and duffle bags, the scene begins with CASSIE sitting on the ground; RUTH seated in a chair, quietly thinking and praying; and HARPER pacing back and forth. They're all very somber as they wait for JUNGLE JIM and CJ to return from the local hospital. Then ZANE, wearing flip-flops, enters from behind the station and sets his backpack down.)

HARPER: How are you doing, Zane?

ZANE: I'm, uh, doing okay. I think.

HARPER: That's good, and how's your foot?

ZANE: My foot seems fine. But my boot will never be the same. *(pulls a mangled boot out of his backpack)*

HARPER: Whoa!

ZANE: *(bummed)* I know. And I just got them, GXT Elites, \$199.00 on sale. *(tosses it over his shoulder)*

HARPER: Boots can be replaced. But it's a good thing you were wearing them.

RUTH: That's right. Can you even imagine what would have happened to your foot if you'd been wearing flip-flops?

ZANE: *(looks at his foot and grimaces)* Yeah, let's not go there.

RUTH: Right. Sorry, Sweetheart.

ZANE: *(changes the subject)* Hey, would anybody like something to drink? I'm gonna see what they have inside.

HARPER: Water would be great.

RUTH: I'll take some, too.

ZANE: Cassie?

CASSIE: No, thanks.

HARPER: Honey, you really should drink something. You don't want to get dehydrated.

CASSIE: I just can't right now.

ZANE: No worries, maybe later.

(ZANE exits into the station.)

CASSIE: *(impatient)* How long do you think they're gonna be?

HARPER: I don't know. But it could be a while.

RUTH: Yeah, the skipper was pretty banged up.

CASSIE: *(anxious)* Do you think he'll be okay?

HARPER: I hope so.

CASSIE: I just hate not knowing what's going on!

HARPER: I know. I feel the same way.

(Short moment of silence.)

CASSIE: You know, I don't think I'll ever get those images out of my mind. It was so terrifying.

RUTH: I think we're all in a state of shock.

CASSIE: It happened so fast. Zane was just sitting there fishing, then all of a sudden, this enormous crocodile came out of nowhere, grabbed onto his shoe, and started pulling him toward the water. It was like something out of a movie.

RUTH: *(unnerved)* Oh, it makes me shudder just thinking about it.

CASSIE: I know. And I just froze. But not Skipper; he didn't even hesitate. He jumped on top of the croc and started pounding on its head. And it worked! The croc let go! But then it turned on Skipper. *(short pause)* Miss Ruth?

RUTH: Yes?

CASSIE: Would . . . *(hesitates)* would you pray for him?

RUTH: Oh, I would love to. *(prays)* Heavenly Father, again we come to you and ask you to help Skipper McGee. He did a very brave and selfless thing when he tried to stop the crocodile, and now he needs your healing hand. Thank you for good doctors and nurses and hospitals. Please help them as they care for Skipper. We so long for the day when the curse is finally taken away. In the name of your Son, Jesus, amen.

CASSIE: Thank you.

(ZANE emerges from the station holding four water bottles.)

ZANE: Good thing you wanted water, 'cause that's all I could find. *(hands one to RUTH and then HARPER)*

RUTH: Thank you, Sweetheart.

HARPER: Thanks.

ZANE: (to CASSIE) I brought one for you, too. (hands CASSIE a bottle)

CASSIE: Thanks. I guess I am thirsty after all.

HARPER: (to RUTH) Can you tell us more about the future when the curse is removed? What does the Bible say?

RUTH: Well, first of all, it says that God is going to make all things new, including a new heaven and earth with no sin and only righteousness.

HARPER: Really?

RUTH: Yes, and things will be very different. There'll be no more crying or pain or disease or death. In fact, nothing bad will ever happen again!

HARPER: Wow ! I can't wait.

RUTH: Just think about what that means. No more cavities, no more headaches, no more colds or flu . . .

ZANE: No more shots or doctor visits!

HARPER: And no more hospitals.

ZANE: No more tornadoes!

RUTH: That's right . . . or hurricanes . . . or earthquakes!

HARPER: We could go on and on!

CASSIE: No more crocodiles!

RUTH: Well, there could still be crocodiles.

CASSIE: What?

RUTH: They just won't be dangerous anymore.

CASSIE: Really? What about snakes?

RUTH: Nothing to worry about.

(JUNGLE JIM and CJ enter from the rear of the auditorium. CJ is heavily bandaged, his arm is in a sling, and he's walking slowly with the help of JUNGLE JIM.)

CASSIE: Sharks?

RUTH: Completely harmless. You see, the Bible says that's all part of the effects of sin, which is going to pass away.

CASSIE: Wow!

RUTH: (excited) But what's really amazing is that those who've believed and trusted in Jesus will be with him forever and ever! It'll be more wonderful than we can possibly imagine!

ZANE: Hey, look who's coming!

CASSIE: It's Skipper!

(CASSIE runs to meet them and helps CJ up the stairs and onto the stage.)

CASSIE: (as she's helping CJ) We're so glad to see you! How're you doing? Are you in pain? What did the doctor say? How long do you have to wear those bandages? Do you need anything?

CJ: Yeah, I NEED you to stop and take a breath!

CASSIE: Oh, sorry. We've just been concerned.

CJ: Hey, don't worry. I'll be fine. Who needs ten fingers anyway?

CASSIE: What?

JUNGLE JIM: He's just kidding; everything's good.

(They help CJ sit on a chair.)

HARPER: (to JUNGLE JIM) So, what'd the doctor say?

JUNGLE JIM: Well, naturally, he wants CJ to rest, but his wounds aren't too deep. He should be back to normal in two or three weeks.

RUTH: Oh, thank you, Lord!

CJ: And he doesn't want me wrestling crocs for a while. (to JUNGLE JIM) You forgot that part.

JUNGLE JIM: (laughs) And as you can see, his sense of humor wasn't injured!

HARPER: We're just glad you're okay.

CJ: Thanks, everyone. I appreciate you sticking around. It really means a lot. (short pause) How're you doing, Zane?

ZANE: I'm fine, thanks to you.

RUTH: I just want to thank you for what you did. It was incredibly brave. You put your life on the line for my grandson, and I'm forever grateful.

CJ: Aw, well, as I see it, I didn't have a choice. There was no way that croc was going to mess with one of my group. And besides, I didn't want to lose a boat AND a passenger on the same trip!

(EVERYONE laughs.)

JUNGLE JIM: I probably better get you inside so you can rest.

CJ: All right, I won't argue with you.

CASSIE: (to CJ) Wait! Before you go, I just want to say I'm really sorry for giving you a hard time. I know I wasn't easy to get along with, and you didn't deserve it. You were right. I am going to give you five stars. You earned every one of them!

(EVERYONE agrees and claps for CJ.)

CJ: (heartened) Oh, great, now you're gonna make me cry. Wish I had a joke right now.

EVERYONE: (in unison) We don't!

CJ: *(pretends to be offended)* Hey! *(short pause)* Seriously though, I know our trip didn't go as planned, but hopefully it'll be a memory you'll all appreciate later on. I know I will. I love you guys.

JUNGLE JIM: All right, all right, that's enough. Let's not get mushy or you'll have me crying too! *(to CJ)* You ready?

CJ: Yes, sir.

(JUNGLE JIM helps CJ up from the chair.)

JUNGLE JIM: Oh, by the way, because we guarantee our cruises, this one will be "on the house." You'll all be receiving your money back.

HARPER: Really? Wow, that's nice of you!

RUTH: It sure is!

JUNGLE JIM: Well, we just appreciate you choosing Jungle Jim's and hope you'll come back and give us another try. Have a safe trip home.

CJ: Bye, everyone!

(EVERYONE says goodbye, and then JUNGLE JIM helps CJ into the station.)

HARPER: I guess it's time to go.

(They grab their backpacks and duffle bags to leave.)

ZANE: *(to CASSIE)* Well, it was nice knowing you.

CASSIE: Hey, you can't get rid of us that easily!

ZANE: Huh?

CASSIE: We've got to plan another trip!

RUTH: *(excited)* Really?

HARPER: Yeah, that's a great idea! What should we do next?

RUTH: How about scuba diving in the Red Sea? Or maybe bungee jumping in Switzerland! Or we could climb Mt. Kilimanjaro! I've always wanted to do that!

(EVERYONE exits.)

(Theme music)

