

The Fun Was In Tents!



I used to worry that not having her Dad around in these situations would make her feel left out or sad, but not anymore.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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"It'll be great, Mom," argued Rachael, once we were on our way. "You haven't done anything fun in ages." I grumbled back, "We'd better not have to wear leotards."



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The camp was only about 20 miles from our house in northern California. Upon arriving, we were shown to our room and handed our schedule for the week.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8 AM – 9 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9 AM – 12 PM	Juggling	Tumbling	Trapeze	Clowning & Mime	Tightwire Walking
12 PM – 2 PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2 PM – 5 PM	Face Painting	Unicycle	Juggling	Stilt Walking	Trapeze
5 PM – 7 PM	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
7 PM – 10 PM	Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time	Free time

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by Karen Connolly

After glancing at the schedule, Rachael was impressed. Being a gymnastics star, she had nothing to fear from the week’s activities. On the other hand, I was already feeling nervous. I could easily picture the scene: me falling off a unicycle and everyone else laughing. “Don’t worry, Mom,” Rachael reassured me. “You’ll be fine!” Here was a 12-year-old girl offering support to her overly anxious Mom! I decided that I was going to quit worrying and try to enjoy the week. And I did!



Why do you think being a gymnastics star meant that Rachael had nothing to fear at Circus Camp?



The word “laughing” uses the letters a, u, g and h. Together, they make the sound “aff”. But there are other words that use the same letters in the same way, but they aren’t pronounced in the same way. Try and think of some examples.

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From the moment we stepped into the big top tent, I felt a rush of excitement. The smell of the wood shavings on the floor, the colorful attire of the coaches, and the cavernous red tent—it just seemed so exotic. The regular world of school and work seemed a million miles away from this extraordinary place. Rachael looked up at me and beamed. I smiled back.



How do you pronounce this word? It uses the same letters as used in the word “laugh” – a, u, g, and h. Does it rhyme with the word “laugh”?

[illegible]

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The first activity was juggling. Our coach was a clown called Chico, and he started with an impressive demonstration. Clubs, balls, and knives flew through the air four and five at a time. Suddenly, he threw two balls at Rachael, and she deftly caught them. "Let's see your juggling skills," Chico grinned. Rachael easily juggled two balls, but when Chico handed her a third, she struggled to keep them all in the air.



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Forgivingly, I replied, "It'll wash off."

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

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by Karen Connolly

The remainder of the week provided even more fun and entertainment. Juggling, tumbling, and stilt-walking—we tried them all. There were a few mishaps, of course, and my attempts at unicycling had most people in hysterics. Still, Rachael and I enjoyed every minute of it. The camp coaches were wonderful, and on the day we left, we were really sorry to say goodbye to them.



Earlier, the author said that she was nervous about people laughing at her falling off a unicycle. Here, she says that people did laugh at her, as she had expected. Do you think she was right to be nervous?

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On the way home, Rachael announced that since Circus Camp had been so successful, next semester we should go on a white water rafting trip together. I immediately protested. "But I hate water, and I don't like rafts, and--" "Good, it's settled then," Rachael interrupted firmly. "We can start looking at brochures next week." I sank back in my seat, and all I could do was laugh.



What have you learned about how the author enjoyed Circus Camp?



And have you learned anything about how the author gets along with her daughter?