

ORDER UP

Each year, Jason and Derrick sneak out of summer camp for a night of adventure. Tonight's destination is sure to give them what they ask for.

Jason waited for the signal. He lie on the bottom bunk, fully dressed in shorts, hiking boots, and brown Camp Wakanda t-shirt.

A flicker of light appeared through the cabin window. Jason slipped off the top cover. The light appeared again. *So impatient*, Jason thought. It was impossible to be light-footed with the boots, but being the oldest in the cabin, he doubted anyone would tattle if awakened.

"I thought I was going to see the sunset," Derrick jibed as he handed Jason a flashlight.

"Keep it down," Jason whispered. He followed Derrick away from the clearing of cabins toward the woods at the back of the 1800-acre camp. Derrick looked like Jason's twin, only with a red camp shirt.

"So, what is it this year?" Jason recalled last year's outing. The excitement of sneaking out to the abandoned barn faded when the rumors about gruesome experiments on dead bodies were unfounded.

"Oh, tonight's going to be *way* better than last year."

The dense woods slowed their pace. After a confusing array of turns, Jason started to doubt Derrick's orienteering skills.

"Ha! There it is." Derrick pressed on through a line of trees. To Jason's surprise, the boys were quickly out of the woods, standing in front of a barbed wire fence. "Over here."

Jason followed Derrick, slipping through a gap in the fence. "Whoa..."

Rampant weeds and shrubbery engulfed rusted car frames, tires, sheets of metal, and other junk. Derrick smiled with pride at his find. "Pretty cool, huh?"

They rummaged along a narrow path through the middle of the junkyard. Jason didn't recognize most of the items. "This place must be really old."

"Awesome!" Derrick shone the flashlight on a pinball machine sporting a dull red and silver casing. A soda jerk and waitress on the back panel smiled under the title "Order Up".

The sound of the music startled them. White and red lights flashed. Jason made out the distorted

women's voices.

"-and don't you come back no more. Hit the road Jack--"

Derrick's eyes glowed. Words streamed across a red light panel above the title. *First Player to reach 100000 points wins.*

A short jingle played, and the panel flashed. *Player 1.*

Jason grabbed Derrick's arm. "This is freaky. Let's just go." Derrick pulled out of Jason's grasp. "I mean, how is it even--"

Derrick pulled the plunger. The ball rolled out, flinging to the left and into a miniature white hot rod. Lights flashed and Derrick saw *Bonus: 40000 points* scroll across the panel. He didn't realize the ball released from the car until it smoothly rolled between the flippers.

The ground grumbled. The boys looked at each other, faces pale. Painful screeching echoed through the junkyard. Jason and Derrick acknowledged each other's fear and sprinted for the fence opening.

Rusted auto frames, stacked five high, blocked the entrance. "What the--", Jason gasped. The cars looked eerily similar to the white hot rod.

"--and don't you come back--"

Jason's heart beat so hard he felt his pulse in his toes. The red and white flashing pinball machine appeared behind him. New words flickered on the panel. *Player 2.*

Derrick charged at the machine. His hands made contact and a jolt coursed through his body, weakening his knees. He fell to the ground in a brief convulsion and passed out.

Jason rushed to Derrick and registered shallow breathing. He looked at the entrance, blocked by the pile-up.

"Hit the road Jack--"

The pinball machine continued to flash. *Player 2.*

Jason cautiously approached the machine. Braced for the shock, he hesitantly placed his hand

on the machine. No jolt.

Jason sucked down a breath and pulled the plunger. The ball barely rolled out over the top and caught in a divot. A mini metal arm swung over the ball and snatched it out. The arm rotated to the middle of the board.

Lights flashed and another tune played. *Bonus: 60000 points.* Jason caught his mistake too late. The ball rolled past the flippers.

A creaking of old joints loomed overhead. He glanced up and saw the junk-laden black disc swiftly lowering to crush him. Jason bolted to a waking Derrick.

"What? What's going--" Derrick's eyes focused on the several hundred pounds of metal junk swinging his way.

"We have to get out of here!" Jason grabbed Derrick's hand, pulling him up to his feet. The rush of blood dizzied his balance. Jason pushed Derrick out of the way as the disc released the death metal in a loud clatter.

Derrick got back to his feet and ran to Jason, who had his hand on his shoulder. The sleeve of his camp shirt glistened with blood.

"You're hurt."

"We have to finish the game," said Jason. He winced as the pain radiated through his muscle. "I think it's our only way out."

The singing started behind them. "Hit the road, Jack, and don't you come back--"

"It's your turn Derrick. Hurry!"

Derrick ran to the machine and set the ball in motion. It rolled into a secret compartment in the middle of the board.

"Don't look up," Jason said. "Just keep your eye on the bottom of the board."

Derrick waited for the ball to release, trying not to look at the flashing lights and panel. "Come on, come on!"

The creaking of the loaded crane loudened.

"Come on!"

Finally the ball rolled out near the flippers, and Derrick flicked the buttons. The ball flung back up the board, rolling through a series of hula hoops. A buzzer rang and lights whirled.

Congratulations, Player 1, 120000 points.

"Let's get out of here!"

Metal objects crashed behind them as they ran to the entrance. Their sprint deadened. The stacked cars still blocked the exit.

"no more, no more, no more, no more--"

They both turned to see the pinball machine. The panel flashed its red lights.

Round 2.