

If The Creek Don't Rise

By  
Aurin Squire

UTA  
Andrew Minkin & Rachel Viola  
[andrew.Minkin@unitedtalent.com](mailto:andrew.Minkin@unitedtalent.com)  
ViolaR@unitedtalent.com

## CHARACTERS

1. GETTY - 40s, former army man who run the tent city.
2. SIMONE - 30, the believer of the group.
3. ZO - 20s, cynical tomboy who left home when she was a teen.
4. TAURUS - 30s, ex-con who is camp security.
5. BERG - 20s, junkie philosopher who bangs buckets for money.
6. Sissy - 30s, damaged soul on a mission.

## STORY

When a tent city of homeless people is given a 3-day eviction notice by the government, the community scrambles to pack up, find a new start, and break old cycles.

## SETTING

Camp Hell. A tent city in a Northern California state park right outside San Francisco and Palo Alto. But really the setting could be any city in America with homeless encampments. San Francisco. Seattle, Miami.

Although this work is fiction, the scenario presented is a common occurrence. The criminalization of urban homelessness has scared many people into woods, abandoned lots, and parks. Once situated away from the public eye, instinct kicks in: communities are formed, relationships blossom, a daily routine establishes itself.

## STYLE

The tone of this story shouldn't be too heavy or tragically dark. These are vibrant, and complex people who have pieced together a life. There is humor and vitality amidst the hunger, loss, and betrayal.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

There is a division between the public meeting area and the private tents. Two spaces can be separated by upstage and downstage, or different levels. The meeting area is occupied with campers in various states of living, while the private tents are emphasized with lighting.

1.1

SETTING: Camp Hell. Outdoor meeting area. It's a sunny afternoon. A rumbling of thunder can be heard in the distance. And then screaming. Berg drags Zo away from a fight. Zo holds a crumpled sheet of paper to her nose. Blood covers her face. She yells at a park ranger in the woods.

ZO

YOU CAN'T TREAT ME LIKE THAT!! You fake-ass mixed martial arts bitch!

BERG

Chill Zo! Fall back.

ZO

You tell that Nazi motherfucker to fall back. I ain't a bitch. (to ranger)! Say that shit again to my face, you itty-bitty shrimp cocktail-dick asshole.

BERG

You bleeding all over. Stop moving!

ZO

I'll grind you the fuck up before we put you in a box.

BERG

Yeah!

Berg presses rags to Zo's face.

ZO

We got a whole nation of motherfuckers that will murder you! You lil' dick, piss-on-your-nuts cum rag.

BERG

Yeah! Right! We got a whole nation of motherfuckers who will... um, stomp your dicks off!

ZO

You ain't nothing! You still a bitch-ass Yogi Bear-wanna park ranger!

BERG

Here (guiding her hand to take the rags) And that's Smokey the Bear. Not Yogi.

ZO

Huh?

BERG

Smokey the Bear is the park ranger. (looks off into distance)  
Shit, look at my home.

ZO

Nah, it's Yogi. That fuckass cartoon bear that talks.

BERG

Both of them are fuckass cartoons bears that talk, They're talking bears so they ain't real. They're cartoons.

ZO

Say what motherfucker?

BERG

Bears don't talk. Yogi bear is the one who is trying to get in bitch's picnic baskets. Smokey the Bear is the park ranger who points his finger and says 'Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires.' Now can we stop this bullshit and figure out how to fix my home.

ZO

Don't come at me with that Wikipedia smarty-art professor shit, Berg/ Just cause you went to college and shit...

BERG

/I ain't coming at you like a smarty-art professor. Everyone knows bears can't talk. So a talking bear has to be a cartoon.

ZO

Berg, how do you know? When's the last time you asked a motherfucking bear? And what about the bear at Chucky Cheese? That's not a cartoon.

BERG

That's a robotic rat.

ZO

And why you always interrupting my flow to correct me?

BERG

Cause you're wrong.

ZO

So? That fuckass Hitler was wrong for smashing your tent and popping me in the face. But you didn't interrupt him. You just sat there with your thumb up your man coochie like you were fishing for a wet spot.

BERG

I ain't trying to escalate shit between us and them. But I did yell and put myself in between you two. Shit! They busted up my planks and ripped my tarp.

ZO

You put yourself in between me and his dust trail. Only after Hitler goose-stepped back to his jeep did your punk-ass even bother to help me. (looking at rags) And what are these?

BERG

What does it look like? I'm just trying to stop the blood.

ZO

Berg, I know you didn't just take your filthy junkie blood rags and put them against my nose!

BERG

You're welcome, Zo. No need to thank me.

ZO

Thank you? Nice try, dopehead.

BERG

Nice try what?

ZO

I see what you're doing. You're trying to sweeten me up so you can get more from the stash. Thank you for giving me hepatitis, Ebola, and whatever else is on them crusty dope fiend rags but no deal.

There's the sound of pots clanging  
in the distance.

ZO

That's Getty.

BERG

You think I'm scheming to get-

ZO

-yes!

BERG

You're such a gremlin.

ZO

That's why I was put in charge of the pot.

BERG

You're not in charge of the pot. You just hold it. You know what? Getty will take care of you and this whole fucked up shit.

ZO

Getty ain't God.

BERG

He ain't God but he knows better than to cuss out a park ranger. And he got ways and means.

ZO

If he had so much way and so many means he wouldn't be out here with us.

TAURUS enters carrying a bag.

TAURUS

Yo yo! Just checking the wires. What's Gucci, peeps?

ZO

What's Gucci? Where the fuck have you been, turdcake? You supposed to be security!

TAURUS

Zo what happened to you?

BERG

Park ranger rolled up on us and whacked Zo.

TAURUS

Well damn, Zo. You look like you got a science project on your face. What did you say to the ranger?

ZO

I didn't say shit.

BERG

You called him goofy, stupid, and fugly. You said he was a lame-ass, nasty nob, gooch who looked like he didn't wash his ballsacks. You said his hair looked like it had a family of bulldyke lesbian owls nesting in it.

ZO

What are you, a court reporter? I was trying to protect your druggie home since Taurus decided to break rank and go into town.

TAURUS

I had to make a special run to town, Jesus! Someone's hotter than a hog's twat in August mud. Look, Zo do you need-

ZO

I don't need shit from you except to answer a simple question.

TAURUS

What?

ZO

Which bear was the talking park ranger: Yogi Bear or Smokey the Bear?

BERG

What the fuck you still on that Bear shit for? Taurus, we got a problem--

TAURUS

-I think it was Yogi Bear.

ZO

A-ha! Bow down, bitches!

BERG

What? No, it was Smokey the Bear.

TAURUS

But Yogi Bear lived in a park. Had on a tie and hat right?

BERG

But Yogi Bear wasn't a park ranger. He just who stole food from people's picnic baskets in the park.

TAURUS

What kind of a simple-ass country bear wears a tie and a hat? I mean a hat or tie sure. But a tie and hat? Nah, that mofo was a licensed, certified professional.

BERG

You know what...fine! Sure, Yogi Bear! I don't care anymore. This is so stupid. Why are you so petty?

ZO

Ahahahaha...HA!Smarty-art professor getting all upset and shit. Yeah, I like that. I like that a lot!



ZO

Smarty-art professor. Went to college but don't even know his fucking cartoons like a good American.

BERG

Taurus, Zo won't give me cash from the pot-

ZO

-Now professor dry snitching-

BERG

But that's the camp pot. We all put in that for emergencies like this.

ZO

This snitch bitch just going to use that money to get doped up.

TAURUS

Talk to Getty. He'll settle it.

BERG

When is he getting back?

TAURUS

Should've been back by now. But I'm talking to him first.

BERG

Why?

TAURUS

Cause my news is more important. Guess what?

BERG

Taurus-

TAURUS

I found a woman.

ZO

That's the news? Ugh.

BERG

Big deal. You find chickenheads every day.

ZO

That's cause he a ho.

TAURUS

Cause I'm a stud.

ZO

Same thing.

TAURUS

Wrong. A ho has low self-esteem. A stud has enough steam to spread around. Now admittedly, in my younger day I beat them cakes up. Beat it up like Betty Crocker. Beat the cake and eat the box.

ZO

"Beat the cakes?" Oh my god. Dudes who talk about beating cakes ain't doing nothing but beating off. What's your body count?

TAURUS

My body count is like "Saving Private Ryan." I sniper that pussy from long-range. Trust me. But it's a new day. I found a woman. She's on her way here now. So I'm about to retire my rifle.

ZO

You hear that, Berg? He's giving up his lil' pea shooter cause he skeeted in some ho who probably got a gash so caved in it's looser than a wizard's sleeve.

TAURUS

You just mad cause no one wants to tongue-punch your fart box without a stadium tarp wrapped around that foaming roast beef sandwich sagging between your legs.

ZO

Suck a country mile of dick, you Rumpelstiltskin-looking motherfucker.

BERG

You guys-

TAURUS

-Berg, we're just playing around. We all know that Zo can't get enough of me. She loves me.

ZO

I will slap the pancake batter out of your head.

TAURUS

Bitch, try me. You want equal rights, (raising fists) then you better duck for these equal lefts.

ZO

Hey, these hands are rated E, for everyone. Come over here and get some, T. Come over here, you Sherwin Williams paint-smelling ass ho.

BERG

Guys, will you shut up for a second! This is serious!

Berg hands Taurus the bloody notice.

TAURUS

(reads)

'Hereby declare...an illegal encampment...must remove property within 72 hours or...'

ZO

Someone snitched.

BERG

Guess we'll have to find another park.

TAURUS

Another park? Like it's that easy to move a camp. We got wood burning stoves, tents, makeshift generators, pets, mattresses. I finally got the camp security system set up.

ZO

You acting like you just built Fort Knox or some James Bond villain's lair shit. It's just pots and pans on a string.

TAURUS

When did these rangers roll through happen?

ZO

Just a minute ago when a bunch of rangers made it through your amazing security system without setting off so much as a warning sound and they was goon'ed the fuck up. One was putting up this notice and another one was smashing in Berg's tent when I tried to stop them.

TAURUS

Oh shit! Berg, are you all right?

ZO

Hold up. U-turn this bitch around. I said "I tried to stop them." Berg didn't doing shit but nod off on a box crate.

BERG

I didn't want them to hurt my instruments.

ZO

What instruments? You bang on buckets for spare change.

BERG

It's my fucking trade! Respect it! At least I don't suck truck stop dick for leftover hotpockets. Taurus, I got no roof or even a tarp.

There's the sound of pots jangling  
in the distance.

ZO

There goes your high-tech security system.

TAURUS

Probably Getty coming back from town.

BERG

What do you think he'll do?

ZO

I don't know why y'all think Getty is some sort of camp prophet-Lord-God-almighty-savior? He just another homeless motherfucker with a tent.

SISSY enters with a duffel bag. Zo stares at her with hostility. Berg looks at her lustfully.

BERG

Hey, how are you?

SISSY

Where the bathroom at?

ZO

Excuse me?

SISSY

I said do you peeps have a bathroom in this camp or do you just do it in the bushes like a bunch of runaway slaves?

ZO

Who the fuck is-

TAURUS

-This is Sissy, Zo. And she is my woman.

ZO

Ohhhh. That explains it.

SISSY

What does that mean?

TAURUS

Nothing, baby. Don't pay that snaggle-toothed guttersnipe no mind. We're just dealing with a lot right now.

SISSY

So...are you going to give me a GPS status on where you dragged me to?

TAURUS

This is Camp Hell.

SISSY

What?

TAURUS

That's our nickname for the place. Don't worry it's just a joke name. We use it some times to scare away the creeps who might be thinking about settling around these parts. We got a nice little thing going on here. We got about 20 campers and as long as everyone follows the 3 rules, we keep the peace.

SISSY

And what are the 3 rules?

BERG

No weapons, no drugs, no drama.

SISSY

And Taurus, you going to give me an intro for these folks?

TAURUS

Baby, can we do this later? We gotta a bit of a problem here that we have to take care of-

SISSY

-Well I'm not asking for A&E biography on the motherfuckers! I'm just trying to be polite, get a Christian name, a probation number, something.

TAURUS

This is Zo and she-

BERG

-a she-devil STD gluetrapp. I'm Iceberg or Berg. And I'm a-

ZO

-worthless junkie whose body smells like a dead beaver run over by a truck full of pig shit.

SISSY

You guys sound just like my family. No wonder I tried to burn down the house as a kid. So where the bathroom at?

TAURUS

Keep going down that path and hang a right at Berg's...ah, at the busted tent.

Sissy drops her duffel looks Zo and Berg up and down, and exits.

ZO

Un-uh! What day-old, store-bought fish did you just bring up here in this camp?

BERG

She nice, man. I mean really really-

TAURUS

She's mine.

BERG

Totally dig that. Just saying...good job.

TAURUS

And Sissy is just staying for a spell.

BERG

How she gonna stay when we getting kicked out?

TAURUS

I didn't know that when I invited her.

ZO

Ohhhh...Getty gonna be straight livid when he sees you got guests like a goddamn Ramada Inn.

TAURUS

Sissy is not a guest. She is my woman. And Getty ain't gonna be livid. Not when he sees her. Trust.

A booming male voice echoes across the forest floor. It's Getty.

GETTY (O/S)

"March along, sing our song, with the Army of the free!  
Count the brave, count the true, who have fought to victory!  
We're the Army and proud of our name.  
We're the Army and proudly proclaim."

GETTY enters rolling a handheld cart stuffed with bags. SIMONE enters behind him with more bags.

GETTY

And the Army Goes Rolling Along."  
NOW...EVERYBODY SING ALONG...

He waits. No one sings.

GETTY

Now just the women!

BEAT

GETTY

Now just the men!

BEAT

GETTY

And fuck all of you too! Now just my baby..

SIMONE

Then it's Hi! Hi! Hey!  
The Army's on its way.  
Count off the cadence loud and strong-



GETTY

-TWO! THREE!

SIMONE AND GETTY

For where e'er we go,  
You will always know  
That The Army Goes Rolling Along!

Getty and Simone laugh. They look  
at the worried faces.

GETTY

Goddamn people! Who died?

TAURUS

..Getty.

GETTY

Nevermind. Cause Lazarus has arisen! (takes out wad of cash)  
Today's word is green. Green on the scene. I got paid out. Paid  
out at the pawn and got rid of all that dusty stuff in my tent.  
Got some food from the pantry so we're good for the next few  
days. And I smell like a new bag of money. Green on the scene.

TAURUS

Getty brother-

GETTY

Yo, what's Gucci Taurus? Do kids still say that? You gucci?  
What's that bag you got? Did you get my stuff?

TAURUS

Yeah, man. I went down there-

GETTY

-lemme see, lemme see.

Getty looks in the bag and takes  
out a simple cream-colored dress.

GETTY

This good baby?

SIMONE

You know I don't care about stuff like that.

GETTY

I do. If you're standing next to a new bag of money you gotta look fresh.

SIMONE

Oh do I?

GETTY

Yes, Simone. Not like my first wife. She was a mess.

SIMONE

Who said anything about wives? Where are you taking this conversation-

GETTY

-Taurus did I ever tell you about my first wife?

TAURUS

Several times Getz-

GETTY

She was the size of a California bed. She was built like a roundtable discussion. She shook her arms and it looked like two bags of cold gravy. And then she wore these big billowing tarps all over her rolls. Used to say it was mauve colored. Mauve must be French for gremlin.

SIMONE

You leave that poor woman alone.

GETTY

I wish she would leave me alone. She haunts me in my dreams.

TAURUS

Getz we gotta a problem..

GETTY

All right all right. I'm just joking. What is it?

TAURUS

Yogi Bear or Smokey the Bear? Which one was a park ranger?

BERG

Taurus!

TAURUS

I'm just kidding. Easing some of the pressure.

GETTY

Huh. I don't get it.

SIMONE

Weren't they both park rangers?

GETTY

I still don't get it.

BERG

They weren't both park rangers!

SIMONE

Well sorry.

TAURUS

Sorry you guys. Look, Getty, we got a problem that just popped up today...

Getty takes out another dress. A red one.

GETTY

And what's this?

TAURUS

That one is for me. Well not for me but for my...woman.

GETTY

His woman? Oh Lord, another woman? There you go throwing good money away. Taurus if you bought a dress for every girl you ever made your woman, the South would run out of cotton.

SIMONE

Are you serious about her?

TAURUS

Serious as I've ever been. She's here right now. And Getty knows her.

SIMONE

Knows her? In what way?

GETTY

No! Keep my name out of it. I don't know any girl, boy, or farm animal you messing with. Your selection is your own. You ain't getting me to co-sign.

TAURUS

She's a righteous woman.

GETTY

Righteous? That's a hateful word. Is she a hateful woman?

TAURUS

No, she's just good.

GETTY

Good and righteous, you hear that? You just be careful about good and righteous people. Those are the people that push you down and mess you up.

SIMONE

(teasing)

Taurus, you gonna become a holy roller?

GETTY

Speaking in tongues and turning water into grape soda. Maybe you can speak at our service and give us our vows.

TAURUS

Wait...you guys are getting married?

SIMONE

No, we ain't. Getty is just being an ass.

GETTY

Hey, don't make fun of me. Love is in the air. I'm in love. Taurus is in love. Now all we need is for Zo to find love.

ZO

You must be higher than giraffe's pussy if you think I'm looking for love in this cesspool of degenerate fuckmuppets.

SIMONE

Zo, your language! And what happened to your eye?

ZO

A Nazi park ranger happened.

BERG

They also stomped down my tent.

GETTY

Damnit Taurus! You're supposed to be on shift today.

TAURUS

I was out getting your stuff.

SIMONE

That dress was a lot of trouble for nothing. (to Zo) Come here...

ZO

I don't need any fucking babying.

SIMONE

No, but you need your eyes so you better come to my tent so I can put some alcohol on it. Let's go.

Simone and Zo exit. Berg hands  
Getty the posted notice.

BERG

The park rangers rolled up on us and smashed my stuff, man. You need to tell Zo to give up some of that camp stash so I can get reimbursed.

GETTY

This is a vacate notice.

BERG

That's why I need some cash from Zo. So I can get some more tarp.

Taurus and Getty exchange a look that. Not trusting Berg's need for the donated camp money.

GETTY

Yeah...um we can talk about that later, Berg.

TAURUS

I just know some ratfucker dined our camp out. Now we only got 3 days to figure this shit out.

GETTY

I thought they would have given us more time.

TAURUS

They just posted it and...what? You knew about this?

GETTY

I knew they were thinking about it.

BERG

Wait, you knew they were going to bust up my tent?

GETTY

I had no idea they were going to roll up like Storm Troopers. Notice to vacate. It's different from an eviction. I mean, I know we can't stay here.

TAURUS

Wait, why can't we stay here?

GETTY

Well I went into the city and I spoke to the local government. I've been trying to-

BERG

-the government, Getz.

GETTY

Yes, I've been talking to the homeless commission-

BERG

The government is the fucking enemy, man! We got J. Edgar fucking Hoover with us! This is what happens when you trust someone who was a Jarhead for the government. Rat.

GETTY

Berg...

BERG

Double-crossing rat.

TAURUS

Berg, I love you man. But if you call my brother a rat one more time you are going to have a much bigger problem. Test me.

GETTY

We are on a flood plain.

BERG

Bullshit. The Gestapo uses whatever excuse they can to smash us in the face and run us off the land.

GETTY

Floodplain. Means that this is where the water naturally runs off. If there's a sudden rainstorm that's big enough and that river spills over, or runs off the mountains too quickly we're finished. And with global warming and all this erratic weather-

TAURUS

And how did you know this?

GETTY

What do you think I spent all that time in the army corp doing? I had a hunch about this camp and then I went to the library and checked out the old maps of this area.

TAURUS

What are we gonna do?

GETTY

Find new ground. Simone and I think we found a new site.

TAURUS

Where?

BERG

Not the city. City is cool for earning money but I can't sleep in that madness.

GETTY

It's not the city. It's around here. And I got friend at Mayflower Movers. They'll cut us a deal to move Camp Hell to high ground. It's gonna be like the Pilgrims and Noah's Ark on wheels trying to get out of here in 3 days. But this will be good for us. You see, I got a feeling.

BERG

Great, James Brown over here's got a feeling? And I got an itch on my nuts. Why don't we take your feeling and my itchy nutsacks and make an elite investigation unit for Scotland fucking Yard.

TAURUS grabs Berg.

TAURUS

We are trying to figure something out! Quit your fucking complaining-

GETTY

-T, come on man!



Taurus releases Berg.

BERG

What is your problem, Psycho-T?

GETTY

Some of us need to break out of these old cycles. The things we keep repeating again and again they got us here. That's why I went down to the city pawn shop and sold all my old stuff. Saved that money for our move so we can break this cycle and leave all that bad stuff behind.

TAURUS

Getty this is like home to me.

GETTY

Yes, and home has all our shit, our piss, plastic bags, and curses buried in it. So we gotta give up something so we can move on.

TAURUS

And what did you give up?

GETTY

My inheritance. It had all this hate from my past tied up in it. So I'm giving it up. Heaving off the heavy stone so I can move.

TAURUS

So what would I give up?

GETTY

Don't take this the wrong way, Taurus, but you have a serious problem with your emotions.

BERG

Yes, Testify. Hallelujah!

TAURUS

No wait a minute-

GETTY

You have a rage that is very very..

BERG

Biblical. Old Testament.

TAURUS

Ok I admit I'm tough. But that helps people. I keep the peace around here.

GETTY

Yeah but sometimes you go too far-

BERG

-Like a minute ago. Why do you think everyone calls you Psycho-T or T-Rex?

GETTY

Your anger got you here, T. You never would've been locked up. Don't you want to break that cycle for this new girl? If you think she's the one.

TAURUS

She is, Getz. Trust me. I'm hanging my rifle up.

GETTY

Then you gotta do it for her.

TAURUS

That's interesting. What about Berg's shit?

BERG

Oh, we can do me later...

GETTY

Iceberg, you know what you need to leave behind.

BERG

What? Oh, I'm sorry for playing too loud at night. I'll give that up. It'll be tough but-

TAURUS

-Berg.

BERG

Nah, man. Are you serious? You can't ask me to give that up.

GETTY

You've been talking about wanting to.

BERG

I can talk about wanting to be the president to. But talking about it and doing it are two different things. I can't, Getty. I get sick if I try to-

GETTY

Maybe try again.

BERG

I start throwing up, get the shakes. I can't eat anything. You know me, Getz. I follow the rules. I don't even shoot up here. I do that shit at another spot around here. I respect your rules. No drugs, no weapons, no drama. I've been good.

GETTY

Berg, I'm not saying you must do it. Just trying to help you break a cycle.

BERG

Help me? I don't need your help. Army rules don't mean shit when it comes to junk. All Taurus has to do is stop acting like an asshole and I gotta give up dope? Why does he get the easy quit?

TAURUS

Easy? Nothing's easy about never getting angry again.

BERG

You get to be pissed off once and a while. It's not like you're being asked to castrate yourself. That's what you're asking me to do.

GETTY

Berg, there are treatment facilities.

BERG

And what, methadone? That government process shit is worse than dope. Getty man, what kind of shit is this? You have visions 'by the way you gotta do this or you don't get in.' And then what, we end up without a place to sleep.

GETTY

Listen Berg, I'm not forcing anyone to do anything.

BEAT

BERG

All right. You almost gave me a stroke, Getz. Don't play with me like that when I don't even have a tent any more.

GETTY

Well you'll stay with Taurus until we fix things up.

TAURUS

I already told you guys, I got my woman here.

GETTY

Well damnit then, Berg stays with Zo.

TAURUS

Great. Works for me.

BERG

Wait what?

TAURUS

What about the others?

BERG

I can't stay with Zo. We'll kill each other. Just tell her to give me some of the stash.

GETTY

No, we'll need all of it if we're moving. We sink or swim together. It's as simple as that. I'm only providing the way for people who want to swim.

Sissy re-enters un-noticed.

TAURUS

Camp prophets got it all figured out then?

GETTY

(sings)

"Valley Forge, Custer's ranks,  
San Juan Hill and Patton's tanks,  
And the Army went rolling along

GETTY/TAURUS

Minute men, from the start,  
Always fighting from the heart,  
And the Army keeps rolling along."  
I told you boys, the army has all the angles covered!  
"And the army keeps rolling along!"

Getty turns and faces Sissy.

SISSY

What's up, brother?