

TENTATIVE PLANS

Indoors enthusiast braves the wild

» **I've never understood camping.** Humankind has invented amenities at the turn of a knob like hot water, air conditioning and indoor plumbing for one main reason: it sucked to live without them, which is why I don't understand people who are inclined to give it all up for "fun and relaxation."

My definition of fun and relaxation involves Netflix, mac and cheese, my cat and maybe some online shopping — not twigs in my hair and sleeping on the ground.

It was high time I broadened my horizons and at least attempted camping, even though I could probably be voted most likely to die if stranded in the wilderness.

Weeks in advance, I planned out the trip meticulously, listing everything I needed to borrow or buy, planning the menu and recruiting some brave friends to accompany me. I secured a ride, booked a campsite and amassed my weapons for a battle with the outdoors.

What I didn't plan on was it raining every single day of the week leading up to the camping trip, leaving the ground muddy and slippery, the sky a dreary gray and the weather much colder than I had expected. Nevertheless, we sucked it up, and my friends and I journeyed to Emma Long Park and paid our \$20 camping fee. Our trip took place on a Friday, so we arrived at 5 p.m., knowing the sun would set at 6 p.m. The park was beautiful, even if the weather wasn't, and herds of deer ate grass and took long strolls near our campsite. Sadly, the deer wouldn't let me pet them, even when I chased them while throwing some deer-friendly snacks their way.

The sun started to set, and it was time to set up our tent. Opening the tent bag that I had borrowed from a friend, we dumped out the materials and began to read the instructions, only to discover the worst — the tent my friend had lent me was missing both stakes and poles. I don't know a lot about camp-

ing, but I know enough to know that without stakes and poles, a tent is just a piece of fabric.

We could now hear actual coyotes howling.

After several frantic phone calls, my mom agreed to run by my friend's house to look for the tent poles and stakes to bring us. In the meantime, we laid out a tarp to sit on and I started a fire (shoutout to my three months of being a Girl Scout). We then proceeded to burn our burgers to the consistency of hockey pucks, and our potatoes burned as well, because apparently you're supposed to poke holes in them before wrapping them in tin foil and tossing them into the fire. In the end, all we had left that was actually edible were s'mores, which are pretty hard to mess up.

The temperature was dropping, and without any sort of shelter, we were freezing to death. It started to lightly sprinkle, so we zipped ourselves inside our sleeping bags with our teeth chattering, waiting for our inevitable death.

Finally, after about an hour of it drizzling and us dying, my mom showed up. She was unable to find the tent poles, so she gently suggested that maybe camping wasn't such a good idea and that we should come home with her. She had barely finished her sentence before we jumped our frozen bodies into the warm car.

If I'm being honest, I had hoped that on our camping trip, I would discover my inner mountain woman, which clearly didn't happen. I'm too attached to Wi-Fi, central heating, microwaveable pizza and warm-toned lighting for applying makeup. Does this make me weak? Probably. But those things weren't invented for nothing, so I might as well enjoy them. Maybe liking pink bubble baths makes me less strong than someone who hikes through the wilderness and sleeps outside in the rain, but I think it also makes me a lot smarter.

—Sophia Ho

