

BACKPACK ADVENTURES

Episode 15

“Connections”

K.T. winced as she lifted her head off the metal bar that topped the school bus seat. When she boarded the bus at four that morning for her first middle school soccer tournament, she was wide awake. The hum of the bus engine had lulled her to sleep on the long, early morning ride. K.T. had been playing soccer since she was five years old, but the teams had always traveled in cars and had left the night before for any tourney as far away as Houston. As excited as she was to make the seventh grade “A” team, she realized now that the travel would not be as much fun. K.T. massaged her aching head. Not only was the bus uncomfortable, but she missed her old teammates. The only one from her former league to make the school team was a girl named Arianna who had been her least favorite teammate. K.T. just couldn’t seem to get away from her snide remarks and pushy, ball-hogging play.

K.T. felt the back of her head. She’d probably have a bruise there from the stupid seat. *Why didn’t I bring my pillow?* she thought. She glanced at her watch. 6 a.m. She wondered how far they had gone and how much longer before she could get off the rumbling bus. At least the sun would be up soon. K.T. peered through the grimy window and tried to see the sunrise. She rubbed her palm across the pane to wipe a clear spot. The glass was warm against her skin even at this hour. March mornings should still be cool, but an unseasonable heat wave had settled over Texas for the past week and

made it feel more like summer than early spring. The game would be sweaty today with all the humidity of Houston added to the heat.

The faintest glimmer of light struggled to rise above the horizon. It looked as weak as she felt. A gray film seemed to coat the sky and obscure the sunrise from her view. *Good*, thought K.T., *maybe the clouds will keep it cooler. Maybe it'll rain.*

The bus braked suddenly and K.T. grabbed the seat to keep from sliding onto the floor. Screams and moans erupted as girls awoke to falling bodies and sliding duffel bags. Friday morning rush hour traffic had reduced the team's journey to a crawl.

"I can run faster than this!" hollered Arianna from the farthest back seat. Her loud voice boomed all the way to the second row where K.T. sat. Arianna had chosen to sit with the eighth graders whom she knew through her older brother, Randall. Randall excelled in soccer on the eighth grade boys' "A" team. He played several other sports as well. He was as obnoxious and loud as Arianna, but the two garnered attention like sports celebrities. People just seemed to let them get away with more.

As the bus crept down the freeway surrounded by cars, trucks and other buses, K.T. wondered if her friend, Jace, was having a better morning ride than she. He was headed to the same tournament on the southeast side of Houston, but the boys' teams had left an hour earlier. Maybe she could reach him on the BPC. She lifted her duffel bag from the gritty floor and fished a small computer from beneath her uniform. The hand held keypad looked like a cell phone, but it could do much more. K.T. and five others stayed connected to each other through the "backpack computer" or as they called it, the BPC. Roman, her friend Connie's brother, had developed the computer from a project his father was working on in the university computer lab. The six members of the

Backpack Club relied on the BPC even more now that they were all into different extracurricular activities in middle school. Roman was first chair trumpet in band and Connie played volleyball, danced, and ran track. Jace and K.T. were in band and played soccer. Connie and K.T.'s friend, Summer, raised rabbits in 4-H and her stepbrother, Travis, raised steers. Travis and Roman had been best friends since first grade.

It was ironic that this weekend all six of the friends would travel separately into the Houston area for different reasons. K.T. and Jace were going to the same soccer tournament on Friday, but might not even see each other all day. Summer and Travis were at the Houston Livestock Show preparing to enter their animals into competition. Roman would be just north of Houston on Saturday for a State solo final. And Connie would be coming to the west side of Houston tonight with the track team. She had a 7 a.m. start time on Saturday in her first event, the long jump. K.T. and Connie had joked they would wave as their buses passed on the highway Friday evening.

The BPC keypad glowed dim green and a small red dot indicated the battery needed recharging. *Drat!* K.T. thought. *I forgot to bring my extra battery and there's no way to recharge on the bus. Better save the battery. I'll just have to look for Jace when we get to the tourney.* K.T. smiled. She had just remembered that her grandmother had planned to drive from Galveston to the tournament and watch her play that afternoon. Maybe the trip wouldn't be so bad after all.

The sun was higher now, but it was still a dull red circle, like a flashlight with red cellophane over the lens. K.T. could see a high, brown haze that she had mistaken for clouds. She looked across the aisle and squinted out the other window. The sky was

darker to the west, but she could make out long, low clouds that stretched out like fingers laying flat upon some invisible table.

The girls on the bus were moving and talking now, unzipping duffel bags and opening small coolers to take out breakfasts of juice and yogurt. K.T. heard a phone ring in the seat at the front of the bus where Coach sat. She couldn't make out the conversation, but could tell Coach seemed upset.

When Coach stood up, the girls quieted instantly. He swayed as he walked down the aisle to the center of the bus and the girls gathered round him. Coach was a former pro soccer player who earned the girls respect with his skillful ball handling and demanding teaching style.

“That was Coach Howard on the boys’ bus. They just reached the tournament. They beat the rush hour traffic. We’ve still got another hour to go, at least, maybe two if the traffic is as bad as Coach Howard says it is.” Coach paused and looked around.

“That means getting to the tournament just before our first match with no time to warm up,” he added. “Go ahead and eat breakfast. We’ll do some stretches on the bus as we get closer.” He turned to go back to his seat as the girls gave a collective groan.

K.T. touched the window again. Hotter than before. Though the sun’s rays were filtered through the brown haze, the sun’s heat still managed to reach the earth in full force. K.T. jumped in her seat as a semi truck pulled up beside the bus and the truck driver let out the airbrakes. The loud swoosh of the brakes buffeted the bus and K.T. grabbed the seatback in front of her.

She glanced outside the window and was amazed to glimpse a herd of black and white cows grazing in a field alongside the freeway. As the bus inched along, the tall

buildings of downtown Houston were barely visible in the distance. The tops of the multi-storied towers were lost in the cloud-like vapors that hung like a shroud over the city. K.T. thought it looked surreal. Cows and ghost towers.

K.T. finished her breakfast and slipped on her uniform. She used her duffel bag as a pillow and tried to catch another nap. Arianna was in the back throwing a seventh grade teammate's water bottle to an eighth grader and laughing loudly. K.T. took her headphones and CD player from her bag. Maybe music would drown out Arianna's antics. K.T. could tell it was going to be a long day.

Jace climbed off the bus and immediately felt the familiar burning in his lungs. He tried to stifle a cough, but ended up choking and coughing even harder. He quickly used his inhaler and felt some relief. Jace tried to pull his uniform shirt over his mouth and nose, but it kept slipping down as he hustled with his backpack away from the bus and its diesel exhaust fumes. The team was gathering near the coaches. Some team members held water bottles only, others had backpacks like Jace. All wore the yellow and blue soccer uniforms of the middle school they represented. Jace loved playing soccer and he had easily made the top seventh grade team. Most members of his select soccer team from last year were on the "A" team and he also knew many of the eighth grade players. A Chinese immigrant, Jace was shorter than most the boys. But he was fast and the coaches told him there was only one thing holding him back from being a starter. His asthma. So, today, at this first tournament, he really wanted to excel.

And I start coughing the minute I get off the bus, he thought angrily.

I can do this, Jace told himself. Just stay calm and use the inhaler. Move slowly and think about something besides breathing. Focus on the game. Focus. Pick a spot on the horizon and focus on that while you breathe slowly and relax all your muscles. Jace's mother had recently begun meditation therapy for back pain and Jace thought it sounded like it should work for his asthma too. He watched his mother in her lessons and practiced with her all winter. It had seemed to help and Jace even thought he might finally be growing out of the asthma like the doctor said could happen.

The bus ride to Houston had been quiet and restful. They had sped down the freeway just ahead of the commuter traffic and made good time. They had even stopped to eat breakfast a few miles north of Houston and Jace's asthma had not bothered him then. Why now? he wondered. Why can't I just make it through this day with no problems? Jace followed his teammates to the sidelines of a large green field where their first game would start in about 45 minutes. Everything was going according to schedule.

As he took his shoes from his backpack, he thought about his best friends, the five other members of the Backpack Club. K.T. would be at this same tournament in a couple of hours, but he wasn't sure if he'd have a chance to visit her or watch her game. He actually hoped he wouldn't have time because that would mean they were winning and advancing in the competition. He wanted her team to do well too. They could share victory stories next week at school. Jace checked the keypad device of the backpack computer. No text messages or codes for call back. Despite the greatest, albeit secret,

computer in the world that connected them, each one in the club was busy with a different activity this weekend.

Even Summer and her stepbrother, Travis, who were showing at the Houston Livestock show, would be in different competitions and maybe not get to see each other all day. Jace wanted to stay in Houston and watch Summer show her rabbits, but his mother said no. Jace had a crush on Summer this school year, but he'd tried to act like everything was the same as last year. No luck. He couldn't hide how he felt. At first, he was afraid of what Travis might think since Travis was a year older than Summer and very protective of her. Travis just laughed and teased him. Summer blushed and changed the subject if anyone said something about Jace liking her. Only K.T. had reacted negatively to his admission that he wanted to go out with Summer. He considered K.T. his best friend so he told her about his crush on Summer. She said they were all too young to have crushes, but Jace remembered when K.T. had liked a boy in sixth grade. Jace agreed with K.T. that their friendships were more important than anything else. Still, thinking of Summer made him happy.

"Jace, get on the field. Stop daydreaming!" Coach Howard's voice shook Jace from his reverie and he jumped up too fast. A cough racked his chest and he buried his face in his shoulder to stop it. Too late. Coach heard the sound and turned around.

"You havin' an asthma attack already this morning? Have you used your inhaler?"

Jace nodded, afraid to speak for fear of coughing.

"Can you take your medication now?"

Jace frowned, but nodded again. He'd have to sit out the first match for sure if he took the meds. This was not how he wanted today to start. He swallowed hard and answered softly.

"Coach, give me a few more minutes. It was just the bus exhaust fumes. Let me sit out here in the open for ten more minutes. If I still feel like I'm going to start wheezing, I'll take the meds, I promise."

Coach Howard looked hard and long at Jace. He thought of Jace as a good kid, hardworking, intelligent, a great soccer player, well-liked and respected by his teammates. Coach Howard shook his head as he surveyed the high, brown, gauzy clouds that reduced the rising sun to an orange glow. Coach knew the rest out in the "open" would not likely clear up Jace's asthma attack. He'd coached an asthmatic player two years ago who ended up in the hospital for a week after the Houston tournament. Was it safe to let Jace find out for himself that he'd need his medication?

"Ten minutes. Sitting. Check back with me before you try to go on the field."

"Yes, sir," Jace answered as he sat down on a rusty park bench. He could see the concerned looks of his teammates as they started the stretching routine. Focus. Relax. Breathe. Jace could tell it was going to be a long day.

Summer sat in her wheelchair near her rabbit pens which were perched on the tailgate of her family's truck. She had brought three pens of rabbits to Houston yesterday and Travis had brought his steer. They were both looking forward to showing at the

Houston Livestock Show for the very first time. Summer was ready to choose her best pen to enter, but now faced an even more difficult choice. All of her rabbits had pink, watery eyes. She had seen no infection before she left so she could honestly answer the judges that she had not intentionally brought sick rabbits to the show. They were eating and drinking just fine and she found no blood or soft droppings or regurgitated food in their pens. She checked their paws and teeth. Everything seemed normal. The rabbits seemed slightly lethargic, but Summer attributed that to the long drive to Houston.

Now, she had to cull the best of her rabbits and enter weepy-eyed does into the tightest competition she'd ever faced. *I'll probably be disqualified anyway*, she thought glumly to herself. Her normally cheerful disposition had melted away after a morning of trying everything she could think of to clean her rabbit's eyes. Her own eyes had itched a few times, but she was afraid to scratch them in case her rabbits were harboring a virus.

As she took her favorite doe from the pen and stroked its soft, brown coat, she tried not to think of how much time she had put into this project. She was the only one in her 4-H club to bring rabbits to Houston, the metropolitan Mecca of livestock shows. Everyone else was showing larger animals: sheep and goats, pigs and steers. They all told her the rabbits were a waste of time, but rabbits were the only animals she could hold in her lap and care for and not have to lead around a show ring. As comfortable as she was with her motorized wheelchair, she was still not ready to parade an animal in front of strangers.

She carefully placed her favorite doe in the freshly cleaned pen and began to weigh the other rabbits. She wished her friends, Connie and K.T., were here with her. They had enjoyed helping her and watching her work with the little bunnies and were

amazed by how fast the rabbits had grown. Both of them were doing other things today and she couldn't ask for their help. Everyone had something else to do. Her mother and stepfather were helping Travis with his steer in the big barn and had told her to wait for them. Well, she was tired of waiting.

Summer was feeling anxious and cranky and she wanted a soda. The heat was beginning to parch her throat. Maybe it was the unusual heat wave that had affected her rabbits' eyes. Suddenly, she caught a movement from the corner of her eye.

Six parking places away, a teenage boy was skulking around the trailers and truck beds. He seemed to be looking for something, his head down, his eyes hidden by a large white straw western hat. Summer looked around. The parking lot had been crowded with dozens of people nearby just thirty minutes ago. Now, it was quiet, isolated, a lonely expanse of trucks, trailers and vans that hid her from view from the big show barn. Her hand instinctively felt for the backpack computer in the canvas bag hanging on the arm of her chair. With the extraordinary BPC, she could push three buttons on the keypad and be far away from here. But that would mean leaving her rabbits.

What if he wanted to steal her rabbits? How could she leave them?

The teen was edging closer and she could see his lips moving, but no sound came to her ears. It was too late to shut her rabbit pens up in the truck bed or try to move them into the truck. She couldn't very well hide either. She took a deep breath and decided to confront the youth before he reached her.

"Hello! Can I help you?" she called out loudly. The boy just kept looking down and moving his lips. His entire face was hidden by his hat.

“Hey, you! What are you doing here?” She tried to sound bold, but her voice shook a little. The boy was close enough now for her to see a pair of very sharp clippers hanging from his belt loop.

The impulse to flee was washing over Summer like the waves radiating from the hot asphalt. It felt more like July than March and Summer could feel the sweat beading on her forehead. Inside, she was praying Travis and her parents would walk up right now. Her hand rested on the BPC keypad. Her throat hurt as she tried to call out again and her voice just cracked in a timid “huh!” that was more gasp than sound. The boy was at the trailer next to her.

In the next instant, the teen turned and nearly stumbled over Summer. His hands reached out to catch his fall and he jostled Summer’s chair, nearly tipping it over. Summer could see the look of alarm in his eyes which were a deep blue, but red and watery. His eyes looked like her rabbits’ eyes.

His fingers flew up in a flurry of gestures as his lips mouthed the word “Sorry.” He looked like he was ready to run, but changed his mind when he saw Summer was sitting in a wheelchair. Summer’s face wore a stunned look as she tried to find the right words. An irrepressible laughter welled up from deep inside and she burst out in a belly laugh. A wave of relief swept over the boy’s face and his shoulders shook as he too found the humor in the encounter. He was tall and gangly, but probably about Summer’s age after all. His face was striking with low set ears and a broad mouth and deep blue, hypnotic eyes.

Summer looked straight in his face and asked again in a normal voice. “Can I help you? What are you doing?”

The boy signed an answer and then realized Summer could not understand. So he mimed. He pointed to her rabbits and used his hand to signal running.

“You have a rabbit that ran away?”

The boy watched her lips and nodded, but put his hands out again to show size. He held them palm to palm about six inches apart.

“You lost a bunny? A little rabbit?”

He shook his head “No.” He looked frustrated and Summer could see tears in his eyes. *So maybe he didn’t have the same illness as her rabbits. Maybe he was just upset. Or maybe my rabbits were crying*, Summer thought. That’s ridiculous. Kind of like this conversation. Then she remembered the registration packet that had all the animals listed. She pulled it from her canvas bag and handed it to him.

As soon as the teen saw it, he smiled and reached for the packet. He quickly turned to the page marked “Cavy” and handed it back to Summer, pointing to a picture of a guinea pig. Summer looked at the photo of the small rodent and then looked up at the boy.

“You lost your guinea pig? Is that what a “cavy” is?”

He nodded and pulled the long clippers from his belt loop. He mimicked cutting the cavy’s nails and the animal struggling and fleeing.

“I can see why. Those look awful!” Summer said, pointing to the clippers.

“Which way did he run? I’ll help you look.” She spoke clearly and slowly while looking straight at the boy who could read lips so well.

The youth looked around and shook his head. He shrugged his shoulders. The guinea pig could have been in any direction by now and Summer knew of only one way to find it.

Summer touched the boy's arm to get his attention again.

"What's your name?" she asked as she handed him a pencil and notepad from her bag.

"Joe." He printed in big curling letters.

"Hi, Joe, my name is Summer."

He smiled at the novelty of her name.

"Joe, if you'll trust me, I can help you find your guinea pig. We can find it really fast. Do you know how long ago you lost it?"

Joe looked at the large-faced watch on his wrist and pointed to 10:00. It was now 10:20. *This should be easy*, Summer thought. She took out the keypad and punched in a few coordinates and times. She knew she was taking a chance leaving without telling Travis, but hadn't they taken a chance leaving her in the parking lot? Besides, she wouldn't really be gone at all. She checked the gates on her rabbit cages and took Joe by the hand.

"Remember, Joe, trust me!"

A swirl of colored light danced with the heat waves above the black pavement and two kids disappeared.

Joe's hand gripped Summer's as the whirlwind set them down in the hot parking lot beside his family's vehicles, a large crew cab truck with a six foot trailer. The trailer had three enclosed cages on each side. A generator powered a small air conditioning unit under the compartments. Two guinea pigs with long coats sat quietly in the temperature controlled cages. Their eyes look beautiful, Summer thought. Joe looked in amazement at the larger one and signaled that this was the one that got away. Summer tapped his watch. It was back at 10:00.

She looked once again into those deep blue eyes.

"This time, hold him tighter!" she said with a smile. "Joe, don't even try to understand this; just do well in the show!" she said in answer to his unspoken questions. She rolled back a foot and pressed the three buttons again. Joe turned the brim of his big white hat against the dazzling lightning flash of color.

Back at her truck at 10:20 am on that Friday morning, Summer was waiting patiently for her parents and brother to return. Her rabbits' eyes were not improving and she wished she had an air-conditioned compartment like Joe had for his cavies. The heat was making her drowsy and she tried to find a bit of shade on the side of the truck. She could tell this was going to be a long day.

The keypad device began to vibrate in her bag and she hurriedly pulled it out, thinking it was Travis trying to call her. It was not Travis, but Jace, another friend of hers and a member of the Backpack Club. He was at a soccer tournament not far away from the Livestock Show. K.T. had told Summer that Jace had a crush on her, but she really just liked him as a friend. She watched as Jace typed a message on the keypad.

Help! Can't Find K.T.! No GPS!

Summer typed a message back.

I can't leave just to help you locate K.T. at the tourney. She probably didn't charge her keypad. Why would you need the GPS? Is the tourney that big?

Jace responded almost instantly:

Find me first! No GPS! KT LOST!

Summer's fingers raced over the keypad.

KT lost the game?

Jace's response would have been a shout if they had been together in person.

NO!!! KT MISSING!!

Summer locked into Jace's coordinates from his last message and pushed the three buttons. She hoped she had typed everything in correctly. Her eyes were watering and her vision was blurry.

Summer found Jace standing at the edge of a wooded area beside a park with dozens of soccer fields. He looked happy to see her, but his smile quickly vanished and was replaced with a frown. He handed his keypad to Summer and scrolled down to K.T.'s message.

Help! Stuck in well. Find me. No juice.

"I understand everything except the juice part" were the first words out of Jace's mouth.

"You understand about being stuck in a well?" Summer asked incredulously.

"Not which well exactly, but how she could be stuck in a hole around here. There are bayous and drainage ditches all around the park and some of them have tunnels where animals or people have dug into the earthen banks. But what's the juice?"

"Her battery's probably almost dead. She never remembers to recharge before she has to travel. She won't risk sending another message and losing the power to her GPS." Summer clicked buttons on the backpack computer and new coordinates flashed on the screen of her keypad. "She's not far, but I can't go where she is. No pathways are shown on the screen. It's amazing how much information we can get from the Global Positioning System. Satellites thousands of miles away can help find a stolen car or a lost friend just by bouncing beams from one point to another and back. You'll have to use my keypad. Why haven't you downloaded the GPS update from Roman?"

"I keep forgetting to ask him for it."

Summer sighed. “Now I know what to get you for your birthday next month!”

Jace blushed and shrugged as Summer handed him her keypad.

“Good luck, Jace, and call me if you need more help. I’ll sit here till I hear from you.”

Jace took off at a run, following the map guide on the keypad screen. The device felt so light when it was disconnected from the BPC. Summer was right—there were no pathways in this part of the park.

Soon, he was in a dense copse of bamboo and vines. Jace could feel that he was headed uphill. He had been sitting on the bench all morning since taking his asthma medication. His cough had stopped, but the tightness was still there. He’d have to pace himself to reach K.T. and still have enough breath to get her unstuck from whatever predicament she was in this time.

“K.T! K.T. Watson!” Jace called out. He checked the keypad. She had to be near here. As he crested the top of the bank of a manmade bayou, Jace could see smokestacks of refineries off in the distance. Were those oil, gas or petrochemicals? No way to tell. *Must be the volatile organic compounds my science teacher was talking about last week*, he thought. The sky above the tall towers looked more like white than blue. Lighter too than the brown that he saw when he looked straight up. He could feel the tightness in his chest coming back and he called out again for K.T.

A faint sound reached his ears. A low muffled groan. A little to his left and down toward the dirty brown water in the bayou. This water looks toxic, Jace thought.

“K.T.!”

He slid down the bank till he reached a small opening in the weed-covered soil. He had found a hole about eighteen inches wide and he could barely see the top of K.T.'s head.

"K.T., can you look up at me? What happened?"

K.T. tried to twist her head up to look, but couldn't turn the whole way.

"Jace, I can't move. My ankle really hurts. I'm so glad you found me!"

"I didn't really find you. I had to get Summer to trace your GPS position with her keypad. I don't have that capability."

"Summer's here?"

"No, she's waiting at the edge of the thicket. Let's get you out of there and we can talk later. But how?"

"Can you find your way back without the keypad?"

Jace looked back at the dense undergrowth. "I don't think so."

"Then I'll have to reach up and hold onto the keypad as you push the return buttons." K.T. moaned as she forced her right arm up over her head and stretched as far as she could. Jace leaned over the hole and stretched toward K.T., but they were still a good two feet short of touching.

"It's no use. You're going to have to tell Coach and I'll get kicked off the team."

K.T.'s muffled sobs could be heard faintly as Jace frantically searched the ground for a stick or piece of bamboo. His eyes stopped at the sight of K.T.'s CD player and headphones laying on the ground a few feet from the hole. Maybe he could tie the keypad to one end and lower the other to K.T. If they were both holding on, would that be a strong enough link to bring them both back? Only one way to find out.

He knotted the headphones around the keypad and dangled the CD player into the hole.

“K.T., reach up and gently grab your CD player. I’ve got the other end.”

“You found my CD player!” K.T. rejoiced through her sniffles. She waved her arm above her wildly.

“Gently or you’ll yank it apart!” Jace warned.

K.T. slowed her arm movement and gingerly grasped the CD player with her fingertips and then her hand.

“OK, got it!”

“Hold on, K.T. If I lose you, I’ll come back.”

“Oh, that’s encourage...”

K.T.’s words were lost in the maelstrom of light.

Friday night, March 13

Dear Journal,

If this is a bit bumpy it’s because I’m writing on a school bus as we return from my first--and last--seventh grade soccer tournament. What a day! We finally arrived in Houston an hour late and everyone was hurrying to get off the bus so we wouldn’t miss our first match. Big mouth Arianna shoved her duffel bag down the center aisle and I promptly tripped over it, spraining my ankle before we ever even got off the bus. I was

prepared to sit on the bench and have a good visit with my grandmother when Coach got a phone call from my mother that Gran was confined to her house due to her emphysema. Doctor's orders. I was bored so I went for a walk or rather a "limp" to listen to my CD player. Thank goodness I took my BPC with me too.

I got lost in the woods trying to find where Jace's team was playing. But I found this really neat riverbank, by-o, or whatever Jace called it. The water was yucky, but you could see a long way in the distance. I was looking up at the sky (which was this funky brown color) when I lost my balance, slipped, yanked off my headphones and fell into a hole. I sent a message with my keypad and the little bit of battery I had left. Jace called Summer and they found me. Well, Jace found me, but with Summer's BPC and keypad. I'm really glad Connie forced me to get the update from Roman for the GPS software. Makes the BPC keypad into a little tracking device. I would have been lost forever if I didn't have the GPS. Jace has a crush on Summer. Guess that's ok. He still came and found me and was really sweet.

Summer said her rabbits weren't doing so well and Jace had to sit out the matches because his asthma flared up. I hope Travis and Connie and Roman have better luck tomorrow. Summer met this deaf boy who was showing guinea pigs. Sounds like my neighbor from when we lived in Galveston. His name was Joe, too. Wouldn't that be weird if it was the same Joe? I remember he had the most beautiful deep blue eyes.

Gotta go. Sorry this is so bumpy. Next time I'll remember my pillow and to charge my battery.

LOL, K.T.

P.S. Coach thinks my ankle is actually broken now. He can't imagine how Arianna's bag could have broken my ankle.

P.P.S. Arianna had to sit out the whole time too. Coach is going to make her run laps for being so pushy on the bus. At least one good thing happened today.