

RULES FOR TOASTING MARSHMALLOWS

A short dramedy
Laura King

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASEY, any gender, high school senior, the golden child.

RYAN, any gender, high school senior, the wild child.

TAYLOR, any gender, high school senior, the overlooked child.

SETTING

A campfire in the woods.

PRODUCTION NOTE

The campfire can be imaginary, or a firepit (without the fire!) can be used.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Rules for Toasting Marshmallows premiered at the Buffalo State Marshmallow Festival, Buffalo, New York, April 17-19, 2019.

There's more than one way to toast a marshmallow.

(Lights up on RYAN and TAYLOR sitting next to an open picnic basket. They are toasting marshmallows over a campfire.)

TAYLOR: Where's Casey?

RYAN: One guess.

TAYLOR: Library?

RYAN: Yup. Probably where I should be too.

TAYLOR: I wish they'd hurry up. We've got to plan for camp. Our first summer as junior counselors!

RYAN: Taylor, about camp—

TAYLOR: I hope we can stay in the same bunk.

RYAN: I'm sure we can, but—

TAYLOR: You two aren't gonna ditch me, are you?

RYAN: Why would we do that?

TAYLOR: I don't know. I think about it sometimes.

RYAN: Relax.

(Casey enters, spots a toasting fork on the ground, picks it up and holds it out in a menacing manner toward Ryan.)

CASEY: You—

RYAN: Hey.

CASEY: Are—

RYAN: What?

CASEY: Dead!

(Casey swings their toasting fork aggressively toward Ryan, who moves out of the way and drops their toasting fork.)

RYAN: Now look what you made me do! I like my marshmallows burnt on the outside and raw on the inside, not burnt into a pile of ashes at the bottom of the firepit.

CASEY: I wish you were at the bottom of that firepit!

TAYLOR: Don't say that!

CASEY: Stay out of this, Taylor. It's between me and Ryan.

RYAN: What is?

CASEY: You know exactly what! The pictures.

TAYLOR: (*Nervously:*) From the party?

RYAN: I took some pictures of my graduation party! I'm allowed to do that!

CASEY: I didn't want anybody to see me in that condition.

RYAN: It's no big deal. So you had a few. Why is everything always so dramatic with you?

CASEY: I knew something bad would happen if they got out.

RYAN: What do you mean "got out"?

CASEY: Don't pretend like you don't know. You know what you did.

TAYLOR: (*Holding out a marshmallow to Casey:*) Calm down, Casey. Have a marshmallow.

CASEY: You thought it'd be funny to post those pictures on my page, but you never thought about what it would do to me.

TAYLOR: They're really good raw.

(Taylor eats the marshmallow.)

RYAN: (*To Taylor:*) Don't eat them raw. You'll get worms.

CASEY: I want an apology!

RYAN: Fine. I'm sorry you're delusional because I never posted those pictures!

CASEY: You took the pictures. You know my login. Who else would have done it?

RYAN: I don't know who did it, but I do know that I didn't do it! Besides, who cares who did it? Those pictures were hilarious.

CASEY: Not to my parents!

TAYLOR: Your parents?

RYAN: How did your parents see them?

CASEY: You know what they're like. I can't do anything without them knowing.

TAYLOR: I could rob a convenience store and my parents wouldn't notice.

CASEY: They're not letting me work at camp this summer.

RYAN: What?

TAYLOR: You're joking.

CASEY: Do I look like I'm joking?

TAYLOR: They can't do that.

CASEY: They said if that's how I act when I'm unsupervised then I shouldn't be unsupervised this summer.

RYAN: They probably just want to keep you away from me. Can't say that I blame them.

CASEY: This isn't a joke. I was counting on that money for my college fund.

RYAN: Your parents will pay for college.

CASEY: No, *your* parents will pay for college.

RYAN: Anything to get me out of the house.

CASEY: I can't believe you did this to me! The one time I screw up and you have to broadcast it to the world.

RYAN: How many times do I have to tell you? It wasn't me!

CASEY: Don't you ever get tired of lying?

RYAN: I'm not lying!

CASEY: You're always lying! (*Imitating Ryan:*) "Oh, Casey, I don't know who let the lab rats loose during your science fair presentation." "It wasn't me who defaced your student government election posters." "Of course, I didn't hide your underwear after gym class." You ruin everything, Ryan!

RYAN: I make everything more fun! If it weren't for me, you'd spend all your time in the library or reading alone in your room.

CASEY: At least I'd stay out of trouble.

RYAN: What's life without a little trouble?

(Ryan teasingly pokes Casey with a toasting fork.)

CASEY: Did you just poke me?

RYAN: No.

(Ryan pokes Casey again.)

CASEY: Knock it off.

RYAN: I don't know what you're talking about.

(Ryan pokes Casey again.)

CASEY: I mean it.

RYAN: Mean what?

(Ryan pokes Casey again.)

CASEY: That does it!

(Casey lifts their toasting prong and faces Ryan in a fencing position.)

You asked for this!

(Ryan lifts their toasting fork.)

RYAN: En garde!

(Ryan and Casey fence as Taylor tries to stop them.)

TAYLOR: Stop it!

CASEY: Admit it. You posted those pictures!

RYAN: I'll admit nothing, you conspiracy-theory crackpot!

TAYLOR: Don't! You'll hurt each other!

CASEY: How would you like it if I did that to you?

RYAN: Go for it.

CASEY: You owe me an apology.

RYAN: Dream on.

(Taylor gets between them.)

TAYLOR: Enough!

(Ryan and Casey don't move but continue to look at one another with daggers in their eyes. Taylor takes marshmallows from the bag and places one on each of their toasting forks.)

Now, sit down and toast some marshmallows so we can figure this out!

(Taylor sits. Ryan and Casey do not.)

SIT!

(Ryan and Casey sit in a huff.)

CASEY: I don't know what there is to figure out. I'm not working at camp this summer.

RYAN: *(Rolling eyes:)* So what? You can sit around the pool all day. Big deal.

CASEY: It's a big deal to me.

RYAN: Everything's a big deal to you.

CASEY: Yeah, I care about some stuff – so sue me.

RYAN: You don't just care about some stuff – you care about all the stuff. Always have to have the highest test scores, get straight A's, be the teacher's pet. Look at your marshmallow.

CASEY: What's wrong with it?

RYAN: Always the perfect shade of ecru. Be careful. You might get a spot of ash on it.

CASEY: Is that why you posted those pictures? Because you were so happy that one night I messed up?

RYAN: Yeah, sure – if that's you want to believe.

CASEY: I thought I could trust you. That you were my friend.

TAYLOR: We are.

CASEY: You don't know what it's like, always having to be perfect.

RYAN: Thanks.

CASEY: It's a lot of pressure. You know, sometimes my head hurts so much I have to go to the bathroom and throw up.

TAYLOR: I didn't know that.

CASEY: Nobody does.

TAYLOR: You should try to be more like Ryan.

RYAN: Nobody should try to be more like Ryan.

(Taylor laughs and Casey smiles.)

I'm serious.

CASEY: At least you'll be at camp this summer.

RYAN: Guess again.

TAYLOR: Why? What happened?

RYAN: Flunked English. Have to take summer school. Looks like my future is like this marshmallow. Up in smoke!

(Ryan holds up their toasting fork. Casey and Taylor blow out the flaming marshmallow. Ryan, Taylor and Casey eat their toasted marshmallows.)

TAYLOR: I'd rather be either one of you.

RYAN: You're crazy.

TAYLOR: I'm not crazy. I'm boring.

CASEY: Don't say that.

TAYLOR: That's how everyone sees us. Ryan's the cool one. Casey's the perfect one. And Taylor's the tag-along.

CASEY: I think of you more as the glue.

TAYLOR: *(Pulling marshmallow off their hands:)* Because I'm sticky?

CASEY: Because you bind us together.

TAYLOR: That's really how you think of me?

CASEY: Sure.

RYAN: Face it—Casey and I would have killed each other long ago if it weren't for you.

CASEY: At the very least there would have been some serious maiming.

TAYLOR: I always thought if I weren't here, it wouldn't really matter much.

CASEY: If you weren't here, we'd be like a three-pronged toasting fork without the middle prong.

(Taylor smiles and then becomes nervous.)

TAYLOR: I have to tell you something.

RYAN: Don't tell us you're not working at camp either.

TAYLOR: No, but—

CASEY: What?

TAYLOR: I posted the pictures.

CASEY: You?

RYAN: Why?

TAYLOR: I don't know.

CASEY: I can't believe it.

TAYLOR: I can't either. I don't know why I did it, except maybe I wanted to see if you'd stand by me.

CASEY: You did this to test us?

TAYLOR: I just...I guess I never felt like much standing between the two of you.

RYAN: But you knew Casey didn't want those pictures posted.

CASEY: And you let me blame Ryan.

TAYLOR: I'm really sorry. It was stupid.

RYAN: Really stupid.

CASEY: Really, really stupid.

RYAN: Ryan-level stupid.

(Casey, Ryan and Taylor are quiet for a moment.)

TAYLOR: Casey, I'll go to your parents and explain things. I'll tell them it was a joke that got out of hand.

CASEY: It won't matter. I was drinking.

RYAN: Only 'cause I dared you.

CASEY: I could have said no.

TAYLOR: Why didn't you?

CASEY: I wanted to see what it felt like to do something I shouldn't do.

RYAN: How did it feel?

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