The Fastest Alive



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



Never Fast Enough

It's early morning, and we're completely alone. The surface of the lake is still, and the surrounding forest is strangely quiet. By the afternoon, the lake will be overrun with tourists, but at 5:00 a.m., everyone is still sleeping. Well, everyone but me and Kit, my driver.

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"Skis are on!" I give Kit an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Kit grins and starts the boat. I veer left and right, creating gigantic waves. Then, I start wake jumping, catching more air each time. I want to go higher, farther, and faster.

"Kit, you're not going fast enough!" I shout into the wind.

Kit shakes his head but hits the gas. We're flying across the lake, and I can feel the wind and water working with me, pushing and pulling when I need them to. We go faster, and I get a familiar pull in the pit of my stomach. It's how I feel when I'm utterly terrified. It's my very favorite feeling.

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CHAPTER TWO



Brave from the Beginning

I grew up in Texas in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of my childhood was spent outdoors. Ever since I was little, I've been climbing up one thing and jumping off another. I was always getting into trouble with my older brother, Charlie. Just like me, Charlie loved mischief and adventure.

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My parents weren't too bothered by my wild streak. But the neighbors were another story. According to them, and just about everyone else, I didn't act like a girl was supposed to. Or at least, how people used to think a girl should act.

When I got a bit older, I heard the same thing from my teachers and classmates. Looking back, I can't help but feel as though I was born at the wrong time. How much easier would it have been to be born today? Now, it is much more accepted for girls to be thrill-seekers.

My brother and I were always having competitions. We would compete to see who could run the fastest, swim the farthest, and climb the highest. For the longest time, he beat me at everything. But that changed when I was 11 and he was 12.

Growing up, my brother and I had a gigantic oak tree in the backyard. Charlie and I would take turns climbing the tree, seeing who could go the

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highest. I'll never forget the first time I beat him.

The memory is so clear. I'm halfway up the tree, and my legs are trembling. I'm terrified, but I keep pulling myself up, one branch at a time. I don't stop until I'm almost to the top of the giant oak.

I look down at my brother. Even from way up high, I can see his grin. That's when Charlie started calling me Wild One. From that day on, my stunts only got crazier.

I don't recommend most of the stunts I tried when I was younger. They were all dangerous. When you're a kid, you think you're invincible—that nothing can touch you. But now that I'm an adult, I have the aches and pains to prove I wasn't.

One of the scariest things I tried was jumping off the roof onto a trampoline. I know, not smart. I made it to the trampoline but then was launched onto our cement patio. I broke seven bones

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Book Club Questions

1. How is Hannah's childhood like your own? How is it different?
2. Why is meeting Kit a turning point in Hannah's life?
3. What are some challenges Hannah faced as a stuntwoman?
4. Why is this book titled *The Fastest Alive*?
5. What are three milestones in Hannah's life?
6. What do you think is Hannah's greatest achievement? Why?

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