

WILDFIRE RUN Teacher's Guide

Synopsis

WILDFIRE RUN is a story about testing the limits of bravery, taking responsibility for others, and overcoming adversity. Luke Brockett, the twelve-year-old son of the U.S. President, is at Camp David, the presidential vacation retreat, with his best friend Theo, Luke's mother has arranged for something she calls 'summer camp', because Luke isn't allowed to go a real summer camp due to security concerns. Luke has a whole team of Secret Service agents to protect him, but two of them are like his family. One, Adam Martens, is the agent closest to him, and the other, Sal Rossi, is the head of Luke's security. Luke has been surrounded by Secret Service agents for years, and has never been allowed to do anything even slightly challenging or dangerous.

Small for his age and uneasy in his role as the President's son, Luke is confident about only a few of his talents. He is good with computers, as is Theo. Luke can also climb any tree, and he can build almost any kind of gadget. The First Lady has arranged for the arrival of a third 'camper', Callie Lansa. Callie and Luke used to be friends, but time and circumstances have pulled them apart.

A major earthquake strikes Missouri, causing tremors all the way to the east coast, and triggering a fire in the woodlands around Camp David. An evacuation is ordered. On the way out a herd of deer, panicked by the fire, cause the car Luke and his friends are in to crash into the gatehouse. The car hits the gate closing mechanism, and the gate of the electric fence shuts. The gatehouse collapses on the car, injuring Adam. Another agent tries to open the gate, but receives a serious electrical shock from the damaged mechanism.

Luke, Theo and Callie suffer only minor injuries. Sal, outside the gate, is frantic Luke is inside without agents to help him. He calls for a rescue helicopter. Before it can arrive, the fire closes in behind Sal. Luke knows Sal will never leave him alone, even if trapped by the fire, so Luke takes matters into his own hands. Luke must figure out a way to save himself, his friends and Adam, the injured Secret Service agent. While he uses his ingenuity to try to escape, Luke must also come to terms with his own fears, and learn the limits of bravery.

WILDFIRE RUN

Chapter Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

The story is based on the idea that a natural disaster can cause many more problems than just the initial damage. What are all the things that can happen from an earthquake?

Chapter 2

Luke's dog, Comet, is acting strangely because he senses something is wrong before it happens. Do you think animals can do this? Which animals? How do you think they know?

Chapter 3

In this chapter, a small mistake leads to a big problem. Can you think of other cases where that might also happen?

Chapter 4

Even though Luke is the main character, this story is written from several different characters' points of view. Why do you think the author chose to do this?

Chapter 5

Why is Luke so afraid of the sirens? Is there something you are afraid of even though people say you shouldn't be?

Chapter 6

What do you think is going to happen when enough water leaks out of the pool?

Chapter 7

What saying does Luke's father like in times of crisis? What does it mean?

How would you feel if Secret Service agents came to school with you?

Chapter 8

The author is using something called personification in this chapter. What is she personifying? Can you find some phrases that show this?

Chapter 9

Callie's father is afraid she won't fit in at her new school if she wears her cowboy boots. What do you think about people judging other people by the clothes they wear?

What would you have done with the kitten if you had been in Callie's place?

Chapter 10

Animals haven't been taught to fire, but most are very scared of it. What is it called when an animal reacts to something without being taught?

Chapter 11

Both Luke and Callie remember what happened with Callie's horse, Hania, when Luke was last at the ranch, but they don't remember it the same way. How do their memories differ?

Chapter 12

Callie has mixed feelings about her friendship with Luke. What are some of the emotions she feels?

Chapter 13

Even though Luke's father is the President, he doesn't make all the decisions about Luke. Why do you think he doesn't?

Chapter 14

Luke and Theo have very different personalities. How would you describe each?

Chapter 15

How does Luke's father view Theo? What do you think Luke feels about that?

Why does Luke's father always say 'make haste slowly' to Luke?

Chapter 16

Why do you think the kitten is so important to Callie?

Chapter 17

List some of the things that Luke and Callie say to each other or to Theo that hurt their friendship.

Chapter 18

List the series of events that lead to the accident.

Chapter 19

Do you think Isabelle feels as calm as she seems? Why is she acting like she is calm?

Chapter 20

How do you think you would react to a serious emergency?

Chapter 21

The title of this chapter is 'The Quagmire'. A quagmire can be defined as a difficult predicament. What is the predicament in this chapter?

Chapter 22

Callie points out that people usually call 911 in an emergency. Why doesn't Luke think of this?

Chapter 23

What does the saying '*Yield not to misfortunes, but go boldly to meet them*' mean? Why does Luke say this?

Chapter 24

Why is Luke so angry at his father?

What do you think of Luke's plan to get through the defense system? Can you think of another way?

Chapter 25

Theo doesn't want to stay behind even though he knows he might get hurt going forward. Why does he make that choice? What would you do in his situation?

Chapter 26

Why do you think Luke, Callie and Theo take the time to try to save the kitten?

Chapter 27

Luke, Callie and Theo have trouble getting through the security systems into the building. How would you design a secure building?

Chapter 28

Why does Callie get angry with Luke and Theo? How would you feel if you were her?

Chapter 29

What is Luke's new motto? Why does he make one up?

Chapter 30

Why do Callie and Theo disagree with Luke on what to do about Adam?

Chapter 32

Why does Luke insist on being the last one up?

Chapter 33

Why is Luke "not feeling much of anything" at the beginning of this chapter? How do you think you would feel after going through the same situation?

WILDFIRE RUN

General Discussion Questions

1. Luke, Callie and Theo all have very different personalities. What would have happened if one of the three characters hadn't been in the story? What did each contribute?
2. The theme of the nature of friendship runs through this story. What is the author trying to say about friendship?
3. Luke is used to doing what others tell him. At what point in the book does he start to make his own decisions. Why does he do this?
4. The nature of bravery is an important part of this story. Do you think people know they are brave before they have ever been in a frightening situation?
5. What do you think of the ending? How has Luke changed?

WILDFIRE RUN Vocabulary Matching Part A
Write the number of the word next to the correct definition

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Rummage | _____An agreement over a dispute reached by each side changing or giving up demands |
| 2. Tremor | _____Dark, Gloomy, Secluded, not easily understood, not outstanding or famous |
| 3. Authorize | _____To strengthen |
| 4. Compromise | _____A trembling or shaking especially from weakness to disease, a shaking motion of the earth |
| 5. Commence | _____To make an active search especially by moving about or looking through the contents of a place or container |
| 6. Tamper | _____To make annoyed or mildly angry |
| 7. Obscure | _____Having spots or blotches of different colors |
| 8. Mottled | _____To interfere with in a secret or incorrect way |
| 9. Exasperate | _____Begin, start |
| 10. Reinforce | _____To give authority to, empower, to give legal or official approval to |

WILDFIRE RUN Vocabulary Matching Part B
Write the number of the word next to the correct definition

1. Claustrophobic ____ A slender leafless winding stem by which some climbing plants fasten themselves to, something that winds like a plant's tendril

2. Hoist ____ Able to change: likely to be changed, changeable, having differences, not true to type

3. Stealth ____ cut short, so as not to sound connected

4. Plummet ____ an abnormal fear of being enclosed

5. Prototype ____ to lift up, especially with a pulley

6. Evacuation ____ sly or secret actions

7. Variable ____ the original or model or which something is based or formed

8. Staccato ____ To make empty, empty out, to discharge waste matter

9. Tendril ____ to fall straight down

10. Disintegrate ____ slender leafless winding stem by which some climbing plants fasten themselves to a support, something that winds like a plant's tendril

WILDFIRE RUN

Writing Activity

Compare and Contrast Essay

There are many different ways to write compare and contrast essays. This exercise uses the alternating method. In this method the writer switches back and forth between the two subjects being compared and contrasted.

Step 1 Pick two of the three main characters: Luke, Callie and Theo. Use the organizer to help you take notes on the two you choose. Find information on the characters' ages, appearances, personality and interests and list them on the organizer on the following page.

Step 2 Write a draft of the body of the essay. You will go back and write an opening sentence and a concluding sentence afterwards. For example, if you chose to compare and contrast Callie and Theo your essay would consist of sentences following this structure:

Theo's physical description (facts on appearance and age)
Callie's physical description/basic information (facts on appearance and age)
Discussion of how alike or different she is from Theo

Theo's Personality
Callie's Personality
Discussion of how alike or different she is from Theo

Theo's Interests
Callie's Interests
Discussion of how alike or different she is from Theo

Step 3 Write an opening sentence based on what you have discovered about the two subjects. Are they very alike? Are they very different? Do they have some similarities?

Write a concluding sentence restating the opening sentence in a new way, and then add in some of your thoughts on the two. For example, you could write a sentence or two about your opinion on whether or not they will remain friends, or become better friends.

Step 4 Check your spelling and grammar. Write a final draft putting all your work together.

WILDFIRE RUN
Writing Activity
Organizer for Compare and Contrast Essay

Character's Name_____

Character's Name_____

Age and/or Grade
(Callie is the same age as Luke)

Appearance

Personality

Interests
