

# I SURVIVED

## BOOK CLUB

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### I Survived The Great Alaska Earthquake, 1964



## READ-ALOUD

Assign roles to your family and friends for this read-aloud from *I Survived the Great Alaska Earthquake, 1964*, when nervous fifth-grader Jackson goes to school for the first time in his whole life...

### CHARACTERS

Narrator  
Dad

Mom  
Jackson

Miss Lawrence  
Leonor

Chris  
Nora

Mary  
the class

**Narrator:** As Jackson approaches his new classroom, his discussion with his parents echoes in his head.

**Jackson:** *I can't go to school! Going to school will be like being in jail!*

**Dad:** *Come on, Jackson. Millions of kids go to school every day.*

**Mom:** *It's only for a couple of months. You'll make some friends.*

**Jackson:** *(to himself)* I don't need friends. I've always gotten by on my own. Besides, what do I have in common with stuck-up town kids?

**Narrator:** Jackson stops at the doorway to his classroom, his beat-up work boots squeaking on the floor. All eyes land on him. The teacher is young and has a bright smile—not at all the grumpy-grandma type he'd been imagining.

**Miss Lawrence:** Welcome! You must be Jackson. I'm Miss Lawrence. Please come in. Class, say hello.

**Leonor/Chris/Nora/Mary/the class:** Hi, Jackson!

**Narrator:** As the students greet him, Jackson's stomach starts to churn. He wonders if he's going to puke all over the floor.

**Miss Lawrence:** Put your coat and lunchbox here, then sit next to Leonor.

**Narrator:** Jackson does as he's told, sitting next to a girl with short brown hair and cat-eye glasses. She leans over and smiles.

**Leonor:** I'm Leonor. That's Chris, Nora, and Mary.

**Jackson:** Hi. Good to meet you.

**Mary:** Want to sit with us at lunch?

**Narrator:** Jackson wonders why she's asking him this—she doesn't even know him yet. Miss Lawrence saves him from having to answer.

**Miss Lawrence:** Jackson, we're starting with geography today. Where were you living before you came to Valdez? Come up and show us on the map.

**Narrator:** Jackson stands and discovers that

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his legs feel shaky. As he goes to the front of the class and points to the map, he wonders why Miss Lawrence thinks these town kids are going to be interested in his life.

**Jackson:** I lived here. About 20 miles from Glennallen.

**Miss Lawrence:** How exciting! You were living in the bush?

**Mary:** Why did you and your family leave?

**Jackson:** Uh, well, our cabin burned down a week ago.

**Narrator:** A nightmare image of the winter bear flashes into Jackson's mind. His stomach twists again. This time he really is going to puke.

**Jackson:** Be right back!

**Narrator:** He dashes out the door and runs to the bathroom. In the stall, his heart pounds and sweat drips down his back but he doesn't get sick. The door creaks open.

**Miss Lawrence:** Jackson? First days are hard. But you'll feel better. Are you up for lunch? I can take you to the cafeteria.

**Jackson:** Oh, uh, I'll find it myself, thank you.

**Narrator:** Jackson leaves the stall and pushes past Miss Lawrence. She's nice but how can she understand what he's feeling? He doesn't belong here—he belongs in the bush. Suddenly, Jackson hears his name—he's reached the cafeteria.

**Leonor:** Jackson! Come sit with us!

**Narrator:** Although he wants to be alone, he

goes over to the table and sits down.

**Chris:** We have questions! Questions about life in the bush.

**Nora:** Like, how do you take a shower?

**Jackson:** I get water from the creek and lug it back to the cabin.

**Leonor:** That sounds fun. Like camping!

**Nora:** I don't know. I couldn't live without electricity.

**Mary:** I'd miss listening to music.

**Chris:** I'd miss my Twinkies.

**Narrator:** Chris squeezes his Twinkie and some of the filling squirts out. Startled, Jackson can't help but laugh.

**Leonor:** What's the most amazing thing you've ever seen, Jackson?

**Narrator:** Jackson thinks about the rainbow he saw after a storm last summer. But he knows what the others want to hear—blood, guts, and snarls. And he finds he doesn't want to disappoint them.

**Jackson:** A while ago, I spent the day fishing. On the way back to the cabin, I climbed up onto a ridge and saw a pack of wolves right below me.

**Mary:** A whole pack?!

**Chris:** I'd pee my pants if I saw a wolf pack!

**Jackson:** Wolves don't usually bother with humans. Plus, I was up on the rocks—they couldn't get up there.

**Nora:** Then what happened?

**Jackson:** Out of nowhere, a huge grizzly came out of the woods.

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## READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

**Chris:** Yikes!

**Nora:** Shhhh! Jackson, go on!

**Jackson:** Grizzlies are way bigger and stronger than wolves. One swipe of a grizzly's paw can crack a skull or slice open a wolf's belly.

**Mary:** Poor wolves!

**Jackson:** But wolves don't fight alone, they fight as a pack. So when the grizzly went after one wolf, the other wolves came up behind the bear, growling and snarling and snapping at its legs.

**Nora:** Did it work?

**Jackson:** Yup. The grizzly gave up and ran into the woods.

**Chris:** The wolves win!

**Leonor:** That was an amazing story, Jackson.

**Mary:** Better than a movie!

**Chris:** Hey, you should hang out with us after school.

**Nora:** We're going to Leonor's. She has the new Beatles album.

**Mary:** And a Hula-Hoop.

**Narrator:** For a moment, Jackson feels lost and overwhelmed—he doesn't understand what the others are talking about. But then he thinks, maybe if you're part of a pack,



you don't need to feel embarrassed about being lost. You can just follow along. He decides to take a chance and find out.

**Jackson:** Sorry—what's a Hula-Hoop?

**Leonor:** It's the greatest thing!

**Chris:** It is pretty fun.

**Mary:** You'll love it!

**Nora:** So, you'll come to Leonor's?

**Narrator:** As Leonor, Chris, Mary, and Nora wait for his answer, Jackson feels a smile forming on his face. Maybe this friends thing isn't going to be so bad after all.

**Jackson:** Yeah, I'll come. I'd like that. Thanks. ■