



Discussion Questions

1. Helen decides to go into the wilderness because she thinks she needs to learn to be braver. At first, in fact, she's hoping to turn herself into a tough guy like Chuck Norris ("Chuck Norris can slam a revolving door.") She doesn't become *that* kind of brave—but what other strengths does she find in herself?
2. Helen comes to see the kids on the hiking trip very differently as time goes on—particularly Beckett. How does their relationship evolve?
3. Helen's relationship with her brother Duncan changes quite a bit during the story. What about her time on the trip—those experiences with those people—allows her to see him differently? Would what Grandma GiGi told her on the day she paints her portrait have had the same impact if Helen hadn't gone on the trip?
4. When Helen worries about Jake being ten years younger than she is, Grandma GiGi says, "You know that doesn't matter." Does it matter? In what ways are Helen and Jake well-suited to each other? In what ways do you think they'll clash?
5. Helen's a bit of a fish out of water. At one point, wondering what she's even doing there, she said, "When Duncan first told me about this survival course, I'd been planning a trip to Paris. I'd given up Paris for the wisdom of the wilderness." Have you ever forced yourself to do anything scary, or hard, or outside your comfort zone because you thought it would help you get stronger or wiser?
6. Windy says that "getting what you want doesn't make you happy" and "happiness is more about appreciation than acquisition." What do you think? Windy is a complicated mixture of likable friend and romantic foil. Was she an appealing character to you?



7. There's something Helen really, really wants in the story that she doesn't get. What do you think she'll take away from that disappointment? How do you think she'll learn from it?
8. Were there any particular quotes that stood out for you? Why?