

A Life Beyond Limits

Chapter 10

Without warning, light rain began to fall. The drops, which were initially scattered, quickly intensified into a downpour.

The students hurriedly gathered up the trash and got ready to leave. Just then, panicked screams and urgent shouts came from the riverbank.

"Help! Someone's in the river!"

"It's Phoebe. Someone, please help her!"

"Help! Hurry!"

Hearing someone had fallen into the river, everyone panicked. Jack rushed to the riverbank and, in the darkness, spotted a hand faintly struggling in the turbulent water. It was about to disappear beneath the surface.

This was life or death. Without a second thought, Jack stripped off his jacket, ready to jump into the river.

"Jack, are you crazy? That's the river!" Wesley yelled, his voice full of fear.

The river raged with dangerously strong current, and jumping in was practically a death sentence.

Ignoring Wesley's shouts, Jack dove into the turbulent water, moving easily through it toward where Phoebe had disappeared.

The rain fell harder, and the waves on the river made it hard to see anything. Jack relied on his instincts, honed growing up by the river, and a recent burst of strength to keep swimming forward.

His eyes fixed on the spot where Phoebe had disappeared, and he soon spotted a struggling hand. Even in the darkness, Jack saw it clearly. He immediately sped toward the outstretched hand.

Phoebe had swallowed a lot of river water by now. Her mind was fuzzy, and the situation was dire.

Growing up in a sheltered environment with a strict upbringing, Phoebe had never learned how to swim. She had just been trying to pick up the trash by the river when a huge wave had swept her into the water.

Everything around her was a blur, and she thought she was going to die.

Suddenly, a strong arm grabbed her tightly, pulling her from the water with powerful force. A familiar yet faint voice reached her ear, saying, "Hold on to my hand. Don't be afraid. I'll save you!"

Phoebe couldn't see who it was, but she recognized the voice. A wave of relief washed over her, and she was about to call out his name. But as soon as she opened her mouth, water rushed in, nearly causing her to sink again.

Jack held Phoebe tightly, struggling to stay afloat while using a backstroke to conserve his energy. His steady voice was right by her ear again. "Just relax. Rest your hands lightly on me, and we'll drift downstream. There's a sandbar ahead."

Phoebe did exactly as he said. With Jack's help, she stopped struggling and gently placed her hands on him, making it much easier for him to keep them both afloat.

At that moment, Jack was like an unsinkable log. Phoebe rested lightly against him, her head near his chest, close enough to hear the powerful rhythm of his heartbeat.

The river was still turbulent, but Phoebe wasn't afraid anymore. They drifted for a long time before the rain finally eased and the river gradually calmed.

"Look! A sandbar!" Jack's voice startled Phoebe from her dazed state.

Phoebe looked up and saw a small sandbar covered in low grasses, full of life. Phoebe realized she had survived. The relief was overwhelming, and tears welled up in her eyes.

Holding Phoebe with one arm, Jack swam forward with all his strength. They reached the sandy shore. Jack gasped for breath, while Phoebe collapsed onto the sand.

"Can you walk?" Jack asked, his voice full of concern.

Phoebe shook her head. Her legs still felt weak from the shock.

Jack hesitated for a moment, then carefully scooped Phoebe into his arms, carrying her toward the center of the sandbar. Just as he was about to set her down, Phoebe shivered. "It's so cold..."

Jack held her tightly, trying to warm her with his body heat. Despite her embarrassment, Phoebe felt a touch of warmth in Jack's embrace. A faint blush crept up her cheeks, and the fear in her heart gradually faded away.

Finally, the rain stopped completely, revealing a sky full of stars.

Not wanting to stay in Jack's arms any longer, Phoebe softly said, "Jack, you... you can put me down now."

"Okay," Jack said, reluctantly letting go of her. Even though she was no longer in his arms, he could still feel her lingering scent, and a subtle sense of loss washed over him.

At that moment, Jack pulled out a lighter. Surprisingly, it worked, even after being soaked in the river. He ran onto the sandbar, searched for a while, and returned with some dry wood to start a fire.

Jack took off his damp shirt, holding it near the fire and turning it occasionally to dry it. He glanced at Phoebe, noticing her discomfort. Without hesitation, he pulled his shirt from the fire and offered it to Phoebe. "Here, you should change out of those wet clothes."

His words brought a flush to Phoebe's cheeks. Being alone with a man was awkward enough, but the thought of changing in front of him made her even more uncomfortable.

Jack realized how his words sounded and scratched the back of his head sheepishly. "I didn't mean anything by it. I just don't want you to catch a cold."

Phoebe glanced shyly at Jack, hesitated for a moment, then stood up and walked toward a darker corner. She quickly changed into dry clothes and returned to the fire. Even though her outfit was modest, it couldn't hide her graceful figure. The firelight gave her skin a soft glow that drew Jack's eye.

Jack stole a few glances at her, but he soon realized his mistake and quickly looked away. "Are you still cold?" he asked.

Phoebe's cheeks turned slightly pink. She knew Jack wouldn't cross any lines, so she came closer to the fire and replied softly, "Not anymore, thank you."

They fell into brief silence, each focusing on drying their clothes. The heavy rain had passed, revealing a bright moon in the sky and many twinkling stars. The fresh scent of grass filled the air, bringing a sense of calm and comfort.

"Jack, thank you for saving me," Phoebe said, breaking the silence. Her voice was filled with gratitude.

Jack's bravery during the terrifying moments in the river had made a deep impression on her. She didn't know how she could ever repay him for saving her life.

Jack looked up, met Phoebe's grateful gaze, and smiled. "It was nothing. Anyone would have done the same."

However, Phoebe shook her head firmly. "No, you saved my life. I have to repay you."

Jack interrupted her. "You really don't have to. But if you really want to thank me, then..."

Phoebe blinked curiously and asked, "Then, what?"