

## **ONE LINE DESCRIPTION**

A teenage girl who has been through incredible physical trauma discovers – after her grandmother is no longer alive – that she has so much to learn about surviving trauma through her grandmother's stories of being a Holocaust survivor.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Before her accident, Abigail Foder was a teenage girl who was constantly pushing the boundaries of her mother's strict and cautious overprotectiveness. When her mother forbade her to go to a party, Abigail sneaked out through her window onto a tree branch, suffering a terrible fall, causing a traumatic injury. Abigail has loved trees and nature ever since her grandmother took her for her first nature walk, but never learned to climb trees because of her mother Ruth's fear.

When she comes out of the hospital, Abby is recovering in her family's new and unfamiliar home, unable to eat or drink and with no roadmap in sight for her life ahead. Ruth finally tells her that Shayna, Abby's grandmother has passed away while Abby was in the hospital, and Abby is devastated and angry at her mother. How can Abby learn to survive and thrive in the same way, after the home and identity she knew was also snatched away? This starts Abby on a determined journey to know more about Shayna, the holocaust survivor and warrior behind the "grandmother."

Frustrated at how the new house they've moved into after the hospital is missing all feelings of home, Abby asks Ruth if they can visit a "close second"- Sharon's house. Sharon, Ruth's childhood friend and college roommate, is more casual, less neurotic, than Ruth. At Sharon's, Abby looks through an old picture album where she finds pictures of relatives she never really knew about.

Abby drags Ruth to her aunt Rachel's house, where Rachel and her brother, Jason, divulge more clues to Shayna's life and reveal more of her heart-breaking journey, including the loss of her older brother in the camps. Rachel agrees to set up a time where Abby can talk to her great uncle Bernard and Sheldon, who notoriously disagree on everything.

Abby finds out that Shayna had a first husband who died, and that she herself was in Auschwitz.

Ruth's need to protect secrets and Abby's need to find out the truth clash. Abby knows the horrific effects of holding secrets inside however, and feels that she needs to find a way through by learning how Shayna made it through. When Abby intimates that she wants to take her own life, Ruth blurts out that she once hospitalized Shayna for trying to commit suicide. She learns more clues about Shayna's survival, but they just leave her with more questions.

Abby enters a fantastical world where she is visited by her grandmother. Shayna takes her to all of the places Abby has heard about, and she learns about Shayna's first husband and how Shayna held on.

In the final scene, Ruth and Abby go to visit Shayna's unveiling. Ruth is surprised to see strangers laying flowers by her tombstone, and these strangers (which can be played by audience members) reveal themselves to be the students, patient, and survivors that Shayna did speak to and tell her story to. They speak about how Shayna helped them through their own difficulties by inspiring them to imagine and to have a "bit of adventure" - and to hold onto love, wherever you could.

Abby is inspired by these stories being told to her, and the memory of her grandmother, to have the courage to hold on, to love, and to rejoin the world of the living.