

## *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Before reading the book, what was your perception of life in Alaska? What surprised you?
2. What aspects of the lifestyle would you find the most challenging in the wild? How would you handle the isolation, the interdependence among neighbors, the climate? Would you have what it takes to survive?
3. “Up here, there’s no one to tell you what to do or how to do it. We each survive our own way. If you’re tough enough, it’s heaven on earth.” (39) What drives the settlers in *The Great Alone* to Alaska? They’re not all desperate people in desperate need of a fresh start like the Allbrights, but what could be attractive about this unique way of life for some?
4. Did you find Cora’s actions and “liberated” mind-set to be in conflict? What do you think holds her back?
5. Did you think it was going to be the weather or the violence that killed them first?
6. Discuss the forms of love within this book—crazy and romantic love, neighborly love and compassion, love for the natural world, and a mother’s love. What else would you add?
7. “A girl was like a kite; without her mother’s strong, steady hold on the string, she might just float away, be lost somewhere among the clouds.” (118) How else would you describe a mother’s influence? Does Cora serve such a role for Leni—why and why not?
8. Did you see Cora’s explosive act of protection coming? What did it feel like to read that scene? As a parent, do you think you’d be capable of the same act?
9. Did you hold Leni responsible in your mind for any of Matthew’s misfortune? Why or why not? How does Leni show her devotion in the end? Did you anticipate the kind of future that is set in motion for them at the close of the book?
10. Do you think there’s an ultimate place where people belong? How would you know if you got there?