



R E B E C C A  
E L S W I C K

## No Stopping Her

G e m m a O p e n D o o r



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# NO STOPPING HER

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## Reading Guide

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### Preliminary Remarks

- The following assignments offer tasks and activities, from which the teacher or students can choose.
- Many tasks are suitable for talks or presentations to the class.
- Some tasks overlap with others.
- The material can be edited and students may copy instructions, questions, and answers into their exercise books.

### Author's Note

I am a child of Appalachia, growing up in the mountains of Southwestern Virginia. All my life I've heard stories of murder and mystery, steeped in mountain folklore and superstition. My favorite tales were peopled with witches and spirits, and I have always loved a good "whodunit" story.

In elementary school, I read the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew, progressing to Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie. I wrote my first mystery story when I was in the sixth grade about a boy who disappeared called "Where's Charlie". I can honestly say, there's been a hint of mystery in everything I've written since.

### About the Author

Rebecca D. Elswick taught high school for thirty-four years. Twenty-five of those years she spent teaching special education students how to improve their reading and writing skills. Elswick has taught adult literacy classes for GED students and currently directs the Writing Center at the Appalachian School of Law in Grundy, VA. She has published numerous short stories and creative nonfiction in anthologies and journals. Her debut novel, Mama's Shoes, was published by *Writer's Digest Magazine*, the result of winning a contest. It was awarded the *Writer's Digest* Mark of Quality and nominated for *Foreword Magazine's* 2011 Book of the Year.

## FORESHADOWING

Foreshadowing is a literary device used by a writer to give advance hints of what is to come later in the story. *No Stopping Her* is a murder mystery.

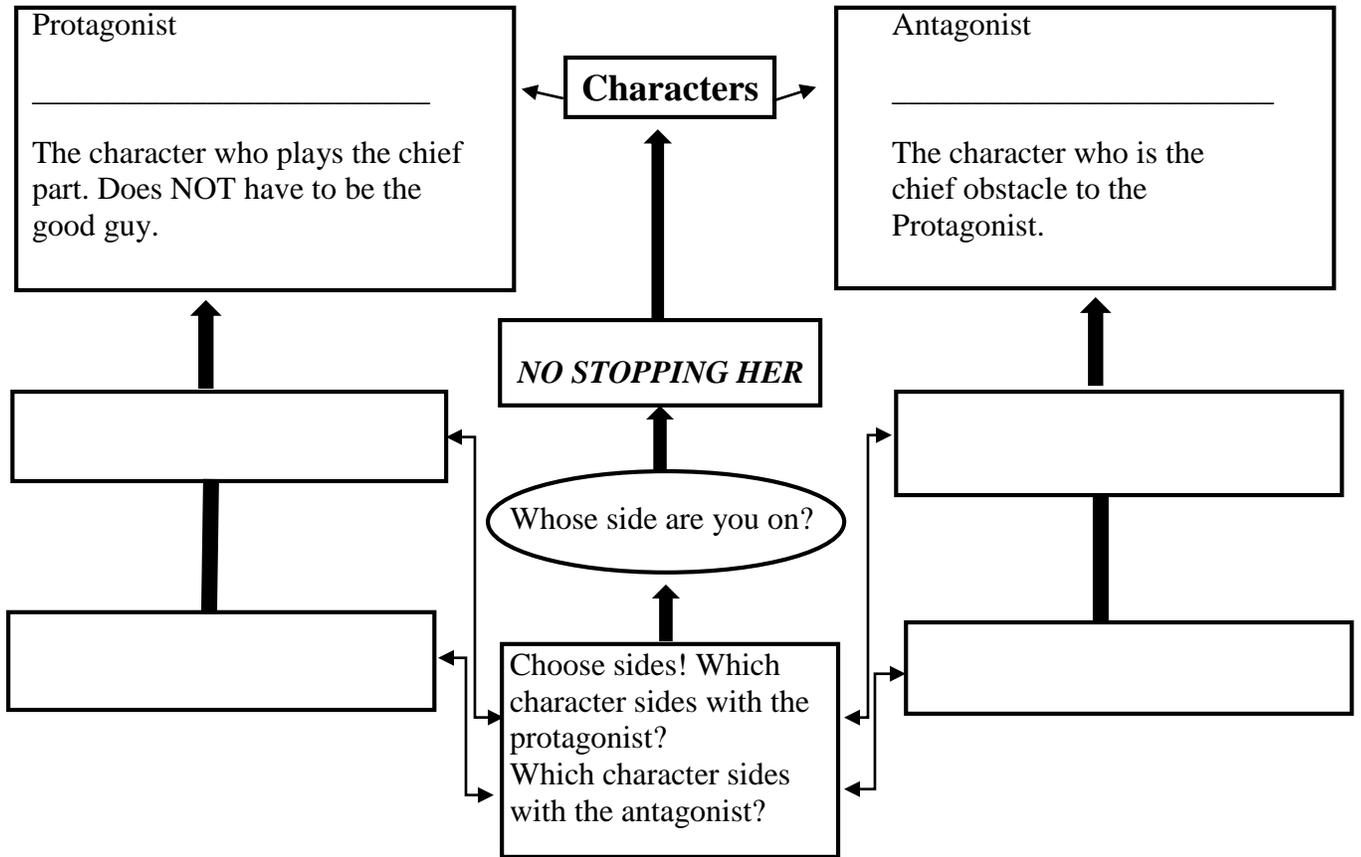
1. How does the title of the book foreshadow what happens?
2. How does the picture of the car on the cover foreshadow what happens in the book?
3. Chapter One begins with a teacher asking her class to define the word “avarice”. What does avarice mean? How does avarice foreshadow what happens in the book?

## POINT OF VIEW

Point of view is the device the writer uses to tell the story. There are various points of view used in storytelling. Can you name a few?

1. What point of view is used in *No Stopping Her*? Explain.

### CHARACTERIZATION and RELATIONSHIPS



### SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

A supporting character is a character that is not the focus of the primary storyline, but appears in the story enough to be more than a minor character.

1. Describe Brittany's friend, Annie. Give an example of how she is important to the story.

2. Describe Lance. Give an example of how he is important to the story.

## **PLOT**

Now that you've determined the protagonist and antagonist in *No Stopping Her*, it's time to analyze the plot. Plots are built around the events that make up a story and the conflicts that develop as a result of those events. A plot is the foundation on which the characters and setting are built. Conflict is what gives the story momentum.

1. Describe Brittany Myerson's conflict with her stepmother.
2. Describe Brittany Myerson's conflict with her father.
3. How does Brittany Myerson resolve her conflict with her father? Her stepmother?

## **CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

The plot of *No Stopping Her* occurs in chronological order. That means the elements of the plot unfold in sequence, one event following another. The following sentences describe the plot, but they are out of order. Renumber in chronological order. Add more details, if you remember!

1. Lance puts a giant jar of mustard in Brittany's locker.
2. Brittany takes one of her father's heart pills and hides it in her jewelry box to remember what it looked like.
3. Brittany's father promises to buy her a black VW Bug when she gets her driver's license.
4. Brittany shows Annie her father's will.
5. Brittany's stepmother, Lynn, is tried for the murder of Brittany's father.
6. Brittany asks her father if she could go to college at her mother's alma mater.
7. Brittany makes sure Annie sees Lynn putting her father's medicine into a pill container.
8. Brittany finds out she's been accepted to Wellesley College in Massachusetts.
9. Brittany spends her summer working as an assistant in her stepmother's vet clinic.
10. Lynn tells Brittany she has to go to the local community college.

## **THEME**

A story may have several themes. Themes are ideas or points that are central to the story.

1. Friendship – How is the theme of friendship central to *No Stopping Her*? Give examples.
2. Bullying – How does *No Stopping Her* portray Lance as a bully? Can you describe a time you were bullied or knew someone who had to deal with bullying?
3. Stepparents – Are any of Brittany’s feeling about her stepmother justified? How does her father make the tension between Brittany and Lynn worse?
4. Can you think of any other themes that emerge in the story?

## **POST READING ACTIVITIES**

### **1. JUST THE FACTS: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY**

You are a newspaper reporter assigned to write the story when Lynne Myerson is arrested for the murder of her husband, Bill. Your story must give the information a reporter needs to convey: who, what, when, where, and why.

- A. What will be the title of your news story?
- B. Write a paragraph for the newspaper that describes the crime.

## **2. CHAPTER 14: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

*No Stopping Her* ends with chapter 13 and a short epilogue. It's your job to write the next chapter, describing what happens when Brittany gets to college. What do you think happens?

## **3. WHAT ABOUT ANNIE?**

What do you think Annie will do with the mustard-colored car? Will Annie and Brittany remain friends?

## **LETTER WRITING**

Twenty years after Bill Myerson's death, his daughter receives a mysterious letter. When she reads it, Brittany discovers it is from her stepmother who tells her she is getting out of prison...

Write the letter!