The Underwater Window

by Dan Stephenson



About the Book

Two swimmers, close friends and archrivals, chase after the same Olympic gold medal.

Archie Hayes is the best swimmer in the world. Talent and luck have brought him Olympic medals, fame, money and women. Doyle Wilson has reached the end of his career with dreams unfulfilled, but he has a final chance in the 400 freestyle, in which Archie owns the world record. Doyle bets that hard work will enable him to beat Archie just once. He burns all his bridges to focus on his lone goal.

But Doyle can?t be single-minded. Archie is not just his nemesis --- they?re best friends. Danger lurks around every corner for Archie, a celebrity athlete with a reckless streak. On a training trip to Hawaii, when Archie is mauled by a wave while bodysurfing, Doyle sees his duty --- a purpose in life that transcends self-interest and even friendship. Archie?s incomparable talent must be preserved and nurtured, and only Doyle can do it. Though Archie?s demise would liquidate the main obstacle in Doyle?s path to greatness, Doyle rescues him. Repeatedly.

Doyle?s odyssey to the Olympics teaches him about true friendship and love, the meaning of sacrifice and overcoming obstacles.

Discussion Guide

1. There is a fair amount of symbolism in **The Underwater Window**, including in the title. What purpose does the real underwater window serve, and how is the title symbolic?

2. What is the symbolism of the ready room? Doyle says Molly has been in a ready room herself. What does that mean?

3. Only a tiny fraction of swimmers become Olympic gold medalists. Should young swimmers be encouraged to dream

of being gold medalists? Why is it worth the hours they put in if they don?t win gold medals? From the beginning of the novel to the end, how has Doyle grown?

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5. If Archie were a real person, would he be flattered or insulted by how he?s portrayed in **The Underwater Window**? How might Archie tell the story differently?

6. What is the meaning of swimming to someone who does not get fame or glory or money out of it? How can that meaning be ?parlayed? on dry land? Can non-swimmers experience a parlay of that sort from other endeavors?

7. Do you have a bubble on your thumb? How can it be a good thing in your life?

8. Have you ever felt like Sheldon Kurtz? What did you do about it?

9. In Doyle?s choosing between Molly and Camille, what was (were) the deciding factor(s)? What does his choice say about his character?

10. What new fact or concept did you learn about the sport of swimming from this novel? Were you inspired to do anything after reading **The Underwater Window**?

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Author Bio

Dan Stephenson is an attorney who practices in Los Angeles. He was captain of the UCLA swim team in the 1970s and was a Pac-10 champion and All-American. Dan currently swims in masters competitions and won four gold medals at the 2012 FINA Masters World Championships in Riccione, Italy. He holds two masters world records. Dan lives in Altadena, California with his wife Tracey. He has two grown children and a grandson.

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