



Read the story again, then answer each question with details and your own thinking.

The Big Comeback



The River Hawks were down by 18 points at halftime. In the locker room, nobody spoke. Marcus, the team captain, stared at his untied shoelace.

Coach Rivera walked in, looked around the room, and sat down on a bench. She didn't shout. "Eighteen points," she said quietly. "That's six three-point plays. That's less than three minutes of real basketball. Do you believe that?"

Nobody answered. Then DeShawn, the youngest player, nodded slowly. "I believe it," he said.

Coach Rivera smiled. "Then let's go get it."

The second half was different. Marcus played through a twisted ankle he hadn't mentioned. The Hawks pressed hard on defence. The crowd — which had been going quiet — began to noise up again. By the fourth quarter, they had cut the lead to four. The noise was so loud it felt like the building was shaking.

With three seconds left and the score tied, Marcus caught the inbound pass at half court. He drove, drew the defender, and at the last moment passed to Jaylen in the corner. Jaylen shot. The buzzer sounded.

The ball dropped through the net. River Hawks, by two.

In the pile-on that followed, Marcus found Coach Rivera. "I almost took that shot myself," he admitted.

"I know," she said. "That's why you're the captain."



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) The story says the noise felt like "the building was shaking." What does this tell you about the crowd?

(2) Why do you think Marcus chose to pass to Jaylen instead of taking the last shot himself?

(3) What effect did Coach Rivera's calm halftime speech have on the team? Use evidence from the story.

(4) Marcus played through a twisted ankle he had not told anyone about. What does this show about his character?

(5) Coach Rivera says "that's why you're the captain" at the end. What does she mean?

