



Daredevils



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Mitchell Lane

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contents

1	King of the High Wire	4
2	Don't You Dare!	10
3	Finding Inspiration	18
4	Training Never Stops	26
5	Turning Passion into a Career	34
	Glossary	44
	Find Out More	45
	Works Consulted	46
	Index	48
	About the Author	48



**King of the
HIGHWIRE**

chapter

01



Masaya Volcano in Nicaragua is one of the most active volcanoes in the world.

Clouds of smoke. Toxic gas. Brutal winds and a lake of fire. It may sound like the trailer for a new action movie. But it's not. It's footage of daredevil Nik Wallenda. A daredevil is someone who performs **stunts** for a living.

On March 4, 2020, Wallenda crossed Masaya Volcano in Nicaragua. Masaya is known as the Mouth of Hell. He walked across the active volcano on a high wire. The Wallenda family has been walking on wires since the 1780s. But Nik Wallenda has taken the family name to new heights. Before his volcano stunt, Wallenda walked on high wires over Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon. He also set multiple Guinness World Records.

A Family Affair

The Flying Wallendas have appeared together in circuses for nearly seven generations. They perform their gravity-defying stunts all over the world. The group's most famous stunt is a seven-person pyramid on a high wire.

Many people wonder how Wallenda does it. “It’s all about training and preparation,” he told *Esquire* magazine. Before each stunt, Wallenda studies the space he will cross. He sets a practice wire close to the ground. If the stunt will be uphill, Wallenda sets his wire at an angle. If the area is known for high winds, he brings in huge fans to copy those conditions. Sometimes, Wallenda even practices blindfolded.

Every time Wallenda attempts a stunt, his training pays off. At the volcano, he walked 1,800 feet (549 m) above boiling lava. Clouds of acidic smoke ate at the wires. Hot air blasted his body. Wind pushed against him. But Wallenda was not afraid. He was prepared. His crew had **reinforced** the wires. A gas mask protected him from fumes. Goggles kept smoke out of his eyes. And a harness secured him to a safety line. Wallenda crossed the volcano in thirty-one minutes. He was tired and sweaty. But he never slipped.

King of the **HIGHWIRE**



Nik Wallenda crossed Masaya Volcano
on a high wire on March 4, 2020.

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