

Linking Turns

A coming-of-age sports feature synopsis
By Jax Meyer, jax.meyer.author@gmail.com

While following her dream to become a professional snowboarder, a transgender teen finds the courage necessary to openly embrace her gender identity despite the backlash.

Synopsis

When we meet Faith, she's snowboarding the terrain park in Big White Resort, British Columbia, showing her impressive skills. She gets stuck waiting behind the competitive snowboarding team while they practice a trick she's already mastered. After giving her best friend, Jake, a pep talk, and trading insults with a boy who hates her, she nails the trick. Coach remains indifferent because she can't afford the team fees.

Faith heads off to teach a beginner's snowboarding lesson where things don't go as planned. That's when Ripley, a visiting non-binary snowboarder Faith has an online crush on, offers to help. Ripley endears them self despite their bad jokes. The two spend time together, riding, flirting and bonding over their gender differences. Later that day, the best girl on the team is injured and Coach begrudgingly offers Faith a free spot on the team.

Ripley encourages Faith to go for it, but Faith knows life as an openly trans athlete is dangerous, even without a competitive advantage. Over four days, Faith and Ripley solidify their friendship and burgeoning romance while Faith convinces her parents to let her compete without disclosing to Canada Snowboard that she is trans. Before Ripley returns to Colorado, they share a kiss and vow to remain in touch.

Faith's first competition with the team goes horribly thanks to Jake's homophobic girlfriend. She considers quitting, but takes Ripley's offer to fly to Colorado and do an unsanctioned contest instead. In Colorado, Faith places fourth. Ripley admits that they want more than friendship, leading to a romantic evening. But the next morning, reality crashes around the pair.

Faith's performance in Vail angers Jake's girlfriend who demands Faith out herself. Unwilling to be open, Faith meets with Canada Snowboard without telling anyone, including her parents or Ripley. No one is happy when they find out, leaving Faith feeling alone.

Changing their minds, her parents encourage her to be brave and come out. Faith realizes she doesn't want to give up her dreams and asks for Ripley's support as well. Faith tells her story to Snowboarder Magazine, resulting in backlash. When things are most difficult, Faith and Ripley are invited to MS Superpark, a four day event for women in snowboarding where Faith gains the respect of everyone, including her hero who was on the fence. Days later, Faith resumes competing to find Jake has given people Have Faith stickers to show support, outnumbering the protestors. She wins the competition, beating Jake's ex-girlfriend in the process and overcoming all of her fears around being an openly trans athlete.