**Prologue**

1. What makes climbing so difficult besides the actual climbing?
2. What is known as the “Death Zone” and why is it called that?
3. What problems arise as Marc and the other climbers are in Camp Four waiting for their opportunity to summit the mountain?

**Chapter 1 - 3**

1. Where does Mark first discover rock climbing?
2. How does Mark get $300 to go ice climbing at Lake Placid?
3. What is “dinnerplating”?
4. Why does Mark think his Dad is so supportive of his mountain climbing goals?
5. Why doesn’t Mark tell his classmates he is going to Nepal?
6. Describe the scene Mark sees when he first arrives at Kathmandu. Is it what he expected? Why or why not?
7. Why do hundreds of people come every week to pray at the Statue of the Sleeping Vishnu?

**Chapter 4-6**

1. What does Mark learn at NOLS (National outdoor Leadership School)?
2. What goal does Mark set for himself at the end of Chapter 4?
3. Why does Mark call climbing big mountains “inconvenient”?
4. What metaphor does Mark use to describe the streets of Lima, Peru?
5. Why are Mark and Javier so cold when they reach Base Camp at Mount Pisco despite the 70 degree temperature?
6. What record is Mark surprised to learn he has set at Mt. Pisco?
7. What happens to Mark’s face on Mt. Huascaran?
8. How does Mark train for Mt. Everest in Chapter 6?
9. Why does Mark say that too many kids “kill off the present”? Explain what he means by that statement.
10. What pressure do Mark’s parents place on him?

**Chapter 7-9**

1. Why are the risks higher for climbers when they are roped together in a large group?
2. What does Mark do when he reaches the summit of Cotopaxi? Why?
3. Why is Mark’s team unable to climb Mount Chimborazo?
4. Why did Mark decide to take an EMT course?
5. What problem does Mark encounter when Thor signs the group in at the base of Mount Aconcagua?
6. What “stupid mistake” does Mark make on the Aconcagua climb?
7. How does the topography of Aconcagua make climbing difficult?
8. What does Mark’s success on Aconcagua prove?
9. Why does Mark attempt to climb the North side of Everest rather than the more popular South side? What makes the North side more challenging?
10. Why do some climbers criticize Mark’s attempt to climb Mt. Everest?

Chapter 10-12

1. What is unusual about the way some of Mark’s teammates leave Mt. Everest?
2. Why does Mark “rat” on Thor?
3. Why is Mark unable to summit Mt. Everest in Chapter 10?
4. What lie does Mark tell the reporter after his failed summit bid?
5. Who joins Mark at Ama Dablam? How does he feel about having her there?
6. How does Mark feel as he sits on the summit of Ama Dablam? Why?
7. How does Mark pay for his second attempt on Mount Everest?
8. What prank do Mark and Jake plan the film crew?
9. What do scarves signify in Nepal?
10. Describe Base Camp on Everest’s South Side.

Chapter 15-Epilogue?

1. What is Mark’s first impression of the Carleton family?
2. How was Mark different from Richard Carleton when he was 13 years old?
3. Why does Mark travel back to Tibet to climb Cho Oyu so soon after his failed 1996 Everest bid?
4. What decision does Mark make about school prior to his Cho Oyo trip?
5. Why does Mark decide to climb Cho Oyo without oxygen?
6. What news about his dad’s cancer does Mark get as he’s camping with a friend in Pennsylvania?
7. What does Mark realize as he’s showing the slides at school?
8. What does Mark compare his father’s battle with cancer to?
9. How does Mark cope with his father’s death?
10. What new sport does Mark discover after his father’s death?