

Prologue—Within Reach

- May 9, 1996
- Climbing to Camp Four on Mt. Everest
- Foreshadowing the storm on Everest

Chapter 1—Getting Started

- August 1992-November 1993
- Beginning his interest in climbing
- Begins at a camp at Alton Jones Wilderness Center
- Learns climbing at Rhode Island Rock Gym
- Important mentors: Geoff Tabin, Frank Madiera
- Climbs first mountain—Mount Crawford in New Hampshire

Chapter 2—Finding A Way

- December 1993
- Started ice-climbing and training at Lake Placid
- Asked parents to let him go on a trek to Nepal
- Wrote letters and got sponsors for \$4000 of the price (\$5000 to go)

Chapter 3—To Nepal

- March 1994 / Age 13
- Trek Leader: Al Burgess
- Others: Eric and Hillary from California
- Goes to Kathmandu, Nepal to start the trek
- Learns about the Sherpas, native people of Nepal who help climbers and trekkers by carrying their things and setting up camp (meets Jabion)
- Hiked through the mountains of Nepal, climbed three smaller peaks—Yala Peak, Nya Kanga, Tsergo Ri
- Learns about the Nepali culture and religion; story of the sleeping Vishnu and the serpents
- Becomes interested in Everest

Chapter 4—Bigger Ideas

- June/July 1994
- June—Goes to NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) in Wyoming
- Calls and talks to Thor Keiser, who runs Condor Adventures, about climbing in Peru
- Decides to start training for the possibility of Everest

Chapter 5—High Altitude

- July/August 1994
- Peru/South America
- Compares climbing to a pilgrimage—which is like a holy/spiritual journey; sees climbing mountains as getting closer to Heaven
- Youngest ever to summit Pisco
- Leader/Guide—Javier
- Huascarán—must acclimatize slowly and adjust to the altitude so that he doesn't get sick (headaches or stomach issues); youngest to summit

Chapter 6—Getting Physical

- October 1994
- Physical training to climb Everest—uglies, running stairs, sit-ups, personal training, running 5-6 miles each day
- Parent support—they want total commitment to his training; they are not pushing him to climb Everest, just pushing him to train at his best potential

Chapter 7—Ecuador: Success and Failure

- November/December 1994
- Leader/Guide: Javier and Luiz
- Cayambe—roped climbing, does not summit, too much snow
- Cotopaxi, highest peak in Ecuador—volcano, youngest to ever summit

- Chimborazo—did not summit, couldn't even climb due to riots that closed the road
- Illiniza—did not summit, couldn't even climb due to fog and rain that made it impossible to find a route up the mountain
- Tries Cayambe again and is stopped by constant rain
- Learns that failure is a part of climbing; summited on only 1 of 6 mountains

Chapter 8—Argentina

- January/February, 1995
- Leader: Thor Keiser
- Goal: Summit Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere
- Starts by going to Colorado to “try out” for the Everest team, which is what this trip is preparing them for
- Mark's Mistakes—runs out of water and has to drink from a stream without purifying it; goes into the park office and causes a delay due to his age
- Sees many injured and dead climbers who didn't take time to acclimatize
- On the summit—look for the cross; sees a climber riding his mountain bike

Chapter 9—The North Side

- March/April 1995
- Leader: Thor Keiser and Javier
- Back in Kathmandu, Nepal; preparing to climb the north side of Everest—the Tibet side
- North Side: More dangerous, colder, more remote
- Mark's parents were accused of child abuse because they are letting him go
- Both positive and negative press for his attempt to be the youngest ever to summit (CBS news, NBC news, ESPN, newspaper reports)
- Visits Rongbuk monastery, sees a young monk close to his age—isn't able to talk to him but communicates by smiling at him; the monastery reminds him of the idea of a pilgrimage—climbing mountains to get closer to God
- Concerns about “cracks in the structure”—problems among the team; people not working together, not focusing on a common goal

Chapter 10—Everest '95

- April/May 1995; Tibet; north side of Everest
- Describes climbing and trying to acclimatize on Everest
- Still worried that the team isn't getting along
- Upset that Thor isn't climbing as much as he should
- Doesn't summit; breaks a rib coughing and has to leave
- Wants to give out passport applications to the kids at his school to encourage them to go places and make goals

Chapter 11—My Mother's Necklace

- October 1995; back in Nepal
- Climbing Leader: Al Burgess
- Mountain—Ama Dablam
- Mark's mother came on the trip to stay at Base Camp
- Mark almost died on Mt. Rainier by walking out onto an ice bridge
- Youngest to summit Ama Dablam; sits to enjoy the beauty of the scenery
- Makes plans for another Everest climb in May 1996

Chapter 12—To Base Camp with Cameras

- March 1996—Heading back to Everest
- Has a film crew following him, hoping to make a special for National Geographic
- Climbing Leader: Henry Todd
- Climbing Group: Brigeete Muir, John Muir, Ray Dorr, Paul Deegan, Neil Laughton, Graham Ratcliffe, Thomas and Tina, Michael Jorgensen
- Treks from Lukla to get to Base Camp
- Meets Scott Fischer and Anatoli Boukreev, two of the biggest names in climbing; they treat Mark like an equal, which impresses him

Chapter 13—Everest '96

- April 1996
- Start by climbing through the Khumbu Icefall, a frozen waterfall that's very dangerous
- Camp One—April 20; Climb to acclimatize—get used to the higher altitude
- Climbing to Camp Two—April 22; sees “cracks in the structure” again because his team is arguing
- Meets some important people: David Breashears, Rob Hall, Jon Krakauer, Beck Weathers, Andy Harris, and Yasuko Namba; Rob Hall is a guide and owns the Adventure Consultants--\$65,000 per person to climb

Chapter 14—The Storm

- Mark's mom comes to base camp with her friend Carrie
- Climbing teams meet to select climbing dates
- Mark prepares to get to Camp Four, arrives on May 10 during a storm
- On May 11, teams discover that climbers are missing and presumed dead in the storm; Rob Hall's team and Scott Fischer's team
- Dead: Rob Hall, Doug Hansen, Yasuko Namba, Andy Harris, Scott Fischer
- Severely Injured with Frostbite: Beck Weathers, Makalu Gau
- Mark survives and returns to Kathmandu, where he learns that his father has cancer
- Mark and his mom go home as fast as possible

Chapter 15—The Guide

- July 1996; Mark goes to Africa with Roger Gocking to act as an assistant guide; organized by Thor Kaiser with his company Condor Adventures
- Climbs Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya
- Learns how difficult it is to guide; takes a family with a lazy, spoiled child

Chapter 16—Cho Oyu

- August/September 1996
- Practicing for his third attempt at Everest in Spring 1997
- One of the ten highest mountains in the world
- Has chosen to drop out of school for a year and go back after Everest
- Leader: Henry Todd
- Other climbers: Ray Dorr, Anatoli Boukreev, Russel Brice, Jabion
- Worries that teammates don't pay attention to detail
- Youngest to summit an 8,000 meter peak

Chapter 17—The Decision

- His dad's cancer is back and has spread to his brain.
- Decides to be a son, not a climber; wants to stay home with his dad
- Decides to go back to school
- Wants to encourage other kids to stay in school and try to achieve their dreams

Epilogue

- Starts scuba diving as a new hobby
- Meets a SEAL team member and plans a trip to Everest in 1999 and wants to dive to the Andrea Doria following his summit bid