

INTO THIN AIR
Jon Krakauer

Study Guide

I. Characters: Be able to identify each of the following. Explain the position of each in the expedition as well as the fate of each.

- a. Jon Krakauer
- b. Rob Hall
- c. Andy Harris
- d. Mike Groom
- e. Beck Weathers
- f. Yasuko Namba
- g. Scott Fischer
- h. Anatoli Boukreev
- i. Neal Beidleman
- j. Lopsang Jangbru
- k. Ian Woodall
- l. Sandy Pittman

II. Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences.

Chapter 1

- a. Explain why the author has so little emotion when he reaches the summit.
- b. Why was he so delayed in getting to the South Summit?
- c. Why was it foolish for the others to take time for photos and celebration at the summit?

Chapter 2

- a. Why is Mallory associated with the Everest story?
- b. What was the effect of Hillary and Tenzing's success?
- c. How does Krakauer describe what it meant to become a climber?
- d. Explain why the author regrets the commercialization of Everest.
- e. How did he happen to join the Hall expedition?

Chapter 3

- a. Describe Hall.
- b. How does Jon feel about his group? Why?

Chapter 4.

- a. Define: chorteus, mani, yak
- b. Describe Jon's reaction to the three doctors.
- c. Describe the Sherpas.
- d. Explain the way the Khumba has been affected by the increased popularity of Everest.
- e. Describe conditions at Lobuje. why was their stay there lengthened?
- f. What was the rampoche? Why did they visit him?

Chapter 5.

- a. How many expeditions does Jon see as he goes to the base camp?
- b. Explain how long they will be at the base camp and why. Describe the base camp.
- c. Describe Scott Fischer.
- d. Explain why Hall got the contract with *Outside* magazine rather than Fischer.
- e. Explain how the body adjusts to increased altitudes.

Chapter 6

- a. Explain why Jon is apprehensive about his fellow clients.
- b."...Everest was no longer merely a mountain but a commodity as well..." What caused this comment?
- c. Explain how the glacier made things difficult.
- d. When Jon says that even though the icefall was terrifying it had an allure as well, what does he mean?
- e. What is a serac? Why was it difficult?
- f. Why did Jon accept the magazine offer even though his wife did not want him to go?

Chapter 7

- a. List the three qualities many climbers possess.
- b. How does Jon compare his group to Fischer's?
- c. Describe the scandalous behavior of leader Woodall.
- d. Why does Hall expect tragedy?

Chapter 8

- a. Describe Ang Doye, Hall's "main an."

- b. Explain how the sight of the two dead bodies affected the climber.
- c. Why was Ngawang treated so inefficiently when he became ill? What was his fate?
- d. "...Pittman epitomized all that was reprehensible about Dick Boss's popularization of the Seven Summits and the ensuing debasement of the world's highest mountains." Who is Pittman? What does this quotation mean?

Chapter 9

- a. Why was the initial attempt to reach Base Camp 3 aborted?
- b. Explain the trouble caused by the South Africans and the Taiwanese.
- c. Describe Lopsang. Explain why he travels with Fischer.

Chapter 10

- a. What are Jon's feelings about reporting on Hall and his group.
- b. Explain the further disagreements with Woodall and the Taiwanese.

Chapter 11

- a. Explain how Boukeev failed Fischer.
- b. Describe the physical effect of the highest altitude.
- c. What were the several serious accidents?

Chapter 12

- a. How many start for the summit?
- b. What did Lopsang do that Jon felt was a mistake?

Chapter 13

- a. Who decided to go back without reaching the summit? Why?
- b. How did the Sherpas fail in their responsibility?
- c. Why did Jon feel no elation at the summit?

Chapter 14

- a. What mistake does Jon feel he made?
- b. Explain why Beck was not attempting the summit.
- c. Explain why Jon in returning to camp from the summit.

Chapter 15

- a. How is Beidleman rated as a guide?

- b. What news did Hall send to Helen Wilton?
- c. What information did Scott Fischer keep from the others?
- d. About whom was Beidleman concerned?
- e. Describe the problem caused by Pittman, Namba, and Beck.
- f. Explain the problem Beidleman faced with the Sherpas and clients when they tried to reach the camp.
- g. Why is Hutchison banging on pots?
- h. Explain how Boukeev justifies deserting his clients.
- i. Explain the fate of Beck and Yasuko.

Chapter 16

- a. Explain how Woodall again failed to help.
- b. What does Jon think happened to Andy Harris?
- c. What mistake is revealed when Jon talks to Adams?

Chapter 17

- a. What did Harris do that cost him his life?
- b. What happened to Rob Hall?
- c. Why was no one able to save Hall?

Chapter 18

- a. Why could the Japanese ignore the people needing help whom they met along their way to the summit.

Chapter 19

- a. "It was a classic case of triage." Explain
- b. Explain the sacrifice David Breashears made for Hall's surviving people.
- c. What happened to Beck?

Chapter 20

- a. How were Gau and Beck rescued? Why was that so remarkable?

Chapter 21

- a. How did Jon react when he arrived at the bottom of the Khumba Icefall?

b. Explain how commercialism may have affected this attempt to climb Everest. Did they take a greater risk than they should have?

c. What other attempts followed the expeditions made by Hall and the others?

Epilogue

a. What was Beck's fate?

b. Is Jon able to see a positive side to his experiences? Why?

c. Describe the reactions, pro and con, to Jon's book.

Postscript

What is your reaction to the dispute which followed the publication of DeWalt's *The Climb*?