



On Mount Everest

In a way, Brendan's climb up Mount Everest started when he was ten years old. That was when he sat in school with his friends and looked through a book about mountain climbing.

His friends liked the pictures and thought mountain climbing looked like fun. They said they would like to try it. Brendan liked the pictures and thought mountain climbing looked like something he had to do. He did not say this to his friends, but he knew he had to do it someday.

And Brendan did. He started cliff climbing when he was 12 years old. He was in the Mountain Climbers Club in high school. He climbed his first mountain when he was 15 years old. It was a small mountain in Virginia where he grew up.

But Brendan knew he had to climb Mount Everest one day. He knew it would not be easy and that he would need to train for the climb. Mount Everest is the highest

mountain in the world. Mount Everest is in the Himalaya Mountains in Asia. The Himalaya Mountains are the highest mountains in the world.

No one had ever climbed Mount Everest until 1953. Now many people have done it, but it is still a challenge. It is a challenge Brendan wanted to face. He wanted to climb the highest mountain!

Brendan climbed many mountains as he waited for the time when he could climb Mount Everest. He grew to be a strong young man. The people who climbed with Brendan always knew he would make it to the top.

Climbing mountains gave Brendan a love of nature. The mountains he climbed showed him how beautiful the world was. He saw many kinds of animals, such as bears and deer. He always saw the wonders of nature as he was hanging on ropes on the side of a mountain.

Soon Brendan's mountain climbing adventures were more about seeing the

wonders of nature than just climbing a mountain.

But Brendan also saw things he did not like on the mountains. On the mountains he climbed, he saw that other people left things they did not want to carry all the way up or down. It was always a surprise to see what some people left—food, plastic bottles, old shoes, coats, tents, garbage, and much more.

Most people took their garbage back down the mountain with them. But Brendan knew that some did not. He also knew that as more and more people climbed mountains, more and more garbage would be left behind.

Not only did Brendan not leave garbage on the mountains he climbed, he would not let people who climbed with him leave garbage. As Brendan climbed back down a mountain, he even started to bring down garbage other people left behind. He always had a big plastic bag with him. At times he would come down a mountain with a bag full of garbage.

Brendan worked hard to save enough money to go to Asia to climb Mount Everest. Climbing Mount Everest takes a lot of money. He also had to practice climbing as much as he could. All week Brendan worked hard. On Saturdays and Sundays he climbed as much as he could.

When he had time, Brendan read about Mount Everest. He knew about all the climbs people had made, which side of the mountain they climbed, how long each climb took, and who made it up, and who did not.

No one knew better than Brendan what a challenge climbing Mount Everest was. And he knew that many people had to stop as they climbed Mount Everest. They did not make it to the top. At times the climbers who did not make it to the top had to stop because of the snow or the cold. At times they were just not strong enough. There is less and less air the higher a climber goes on Mount Everest. It takes a while for climbers to get used to how little air there is on the mountain.

Brendan did not want to have to stop. He did not want to fail. He would not fail.

Brendan read more and more about Mount Everest. He read about how people had left a lot of garbage there too! There were bits of tents, old air tanks for breathing, sleeping bags, shoes, plastic bottles, and much more. There were even big pieces of an old helicopter that had hit the side of the mountain.

Brendan knew some of these things were very hard to bring down off the highest mountain in the world. He also knew some were not so hard to bring down. People just left garbage there because they did not care.

Brendan always said to his climbing friends, “After I make it to the top of Mount Everest, I will carry down as much garbage as I can.”

His friends knew he would. Some of them had once seen strong Brendan carry four air tanks down the side of a very steep mountain.

It took a long time, but Brendan at last had enough money to go to Asia to climb Mount Everest. It was the right time for him. He was as strong as ever and not many people could climb better than he could.

The days were bright and beautiful the spring Brendan went to climb Mount Everest. The lands around Mount Everest filled Brendan with wonder. Could there be a more beautiful place in the world? And in this beautiful place stood Mount Everest. To climb this mountain had been Brendan's dream for years.

Brendan and his group of climbing friends set up camp near the bottom of Mount Everest. They made sure they had all the things they would need for the long climb up the mountain. They started the long climb one morning before the sun came up.

As Brendan climbed, he set anchors in the cliffs and rocks on the side of the mountain. He put ropes through the

anchors and climbed the mountain. He helped others climb too.

Brendan liked the climb, but he started to see more and more garbage—tanks, tents, anchors, cans, food, and more. “I will take down as much as I can after I reach the top,” he thought.

The first day’s climb was a good one. Brendan and his group made camp for the night. As they did, Brendan saw many things other people had left from their climbs.

For the next several days, Brendan’s group climbed and climbed. They set up a new camp each night. On some days Brendan did not see any garbage. On other days he saw a lot.

But Brendan did not think just about the garbage. He liked the climb and the views. At times he would stop and just look at the views.

The hard work of the climb was paying off. The views were beautiful. The bright blue sky, the snow on Everest and the

other mountains, and the small towns far, far down the mountain all made Brendan happy.

It was at these times Brendan started to make a plan, a plan to get as much of the garbage off Mount Everest as he could. He did not tell his plan to the group as they climbed; he would do that at another time.

The climb was very hard. Some people in the group had to stop as they got near the top of Mount Everest. They could not climb any more. They made camp to wait for the others to come back down.

Brendan was strong and helped the people in his group. It was hard to get air this high up, and all the people had heavy air tanks on their backs.

On the last day of the climb up, Brendan and the others had to rest more than before. Of the five people climbing that day, only Brendan was still strong. But he made sure the other four made it, and at around 11:15 in the morning, all five did. Brendan's dream had come true! He and

his friends shook hands. They were on the top of the world!

Then Brendan said, “Now I would like to tell you about a new dream I have. I will come back to Mount Everest with a big group. We will not come to reach the top. We will come to clean up as much of Mount Everest as we can.”

When his friends heard that, they knew Brendan would make his dream come true. They knew Brendan would not fail!