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Sample MonkeyNotes
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Three Cups of Tea

by

Greg Mortenson
and David Oliver Relin
2006

MonkeyNotes Study Guide by Diane Clapsaddle

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KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly, northern Pakistan known as the Braldu, the Baltoro, or Baltistan.

CHARACTER LIST

Major Characters

Greg Mortenson **-** The main character of this book, Greg is truly a man who will no doubt someday win a Nobel Prize for his sincere belief that the only way to fight terrorism is to educate the people so they can eradicate their own poverty and bring prosperity to their country.

Haji Ali **-** He is the nurmandhar of Korphe – the village leader – who helps Greg from the beginning not only for his own village, but also for other villages in the Baltoro. He becomes Greg's mentor and advisor in Pakistan.

Twaha **-** He is Haji Ali's son and takes over when his father dies. He is a strong worker and a good parent who believes all children; including girls deserve to be educated.

Faisal Baig & Mouzafer Ali **-** These two men are the dedicated protectors and bodyguards for Greg Mortenson. They are extremely devoted and loyal and would give their lives for him…….
Many additional major and minor characters are identified in the complete study guide.

CONFLICT

Protagonist **-** Greg Mortenson is the protagonist who fights with all his might and spirit to……

Antagonists **-** The antagonists are the conservative and extremist elements of the…..

Climax **-** The climax occurs when Kevin Fedarko writes an article about Greg for *Parade Magazine* that causes so much money to be donated to his cause that it saves CAI from…….

Outcome **-** Greg is able to move his mission into Afghanistan as well as……

SHORT PLOT / CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

Greg Mortenson, a mountaineer, takes on the summit K2 in Pakistan in honor of his sister who has recently died. Unfortunately, he fails to reach the summit and becomes lost on the descent. He is found by the people of Korphe, the last village before the glacier. He is so grateful for their help that he promises to come back and build them a school. The book then follows Greg s mssion to not only bring a school to Korphe, but

THEMES

The theme of **compassion** is one of the most prevalent themes. Greg believes in helping those who helped him – the people of Korphe – who need a bridge and a school. This ultimately snowballs into compassionate projects for other villages in northern Pakistan……..

Additional themes are identified in the complete study guide.

MOOD

The mood is at times one of despair at Greg's failure to accomplish what he sets out to do, but he is so often successful that the mood is usually full of triumph and amazement at what the human heart can achieve if it wants to.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF GREG MORTENSON AND DAVID OLIVER RELIN

*Greg Mortenson's biography is taken from his website,
www. threecupsoftea.com/aboutgreg.php and the complete biography can be found there.

Greg Mortenson is the co-founder of nonprofit Central Asia Institute, Pennies For Peace, and co-author of New York Times bestseller *Three Cups of Tea* which has been a # 1 New York Times bestseller for 82 weeks since its January 2007 release, and was Time Magazine Asia Book of The Year.

Mortenson was born in Minnesota in 1957. He grew up on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania (1958 to 1973). On July 24th, 1992, Mortenson's younger sister, Christa, died from a massive seizure after a lifelong struggle with epilepsy.

In 1993, to honor his sister's memory, Mortenson climbed Pakistan's K2, the world's second highest mountain in the Karakoram Range. After K2, while recovering in a local village called…….

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES / ANALYSIS

Introduction – In Mr. Mortenson's Orbit

Summary

David Relin begins his introduction with an anecdote about riding in an old airplane with a Pakistani pilot and Greg Mortenson. The airplane is almost out of fuel and Mortenson realizes that they are flying the wrong way. They were flying through a craggy canyon and if they couldn't make it to their drop zone, there would be no suitable place to put the airplane down. Fortunately, as Relin hung on with white knuckles, the pilot, Brigadier General Bhagnoo, settled the skids at the center of a large H for helipad. He commented afterwards that it was a lovely sortie, but might not have been without Mr. Mortenson.

From there, the three men headed for the village of Korphe, the last human habitation before the Baltoro Glacier begins its march up the summit of K2. It was at Korphe where Mortenson arrived emaciated and exhausted after his attempt to climb K2. It was also here where Mortenson's life changed course and where he found a meaningful path to follow for the rest of his life. Relin and Bhagnoo were welcomed along with Mortenson with open arms and the people of the village began to talk about how their dreams for the future had grown since the big American – Mortenson – had arrived ten years before. They were taken for a tour of the school Mortenson had helped build. Bhagnoo remarked that Greg Mortenson was the most remarkable man he had ever met. He had attracted the most under qualified and over achieving staff of any charitable organization on earth and had achieved well beyond any expectations. The staff consisted of people from every stratum of Pakistan's society and from all the warring sects of Islam. Soon, Relin became aware of the extraordinary character of Mortenson as well.

Relin had heard many stories about Mortenson's adventures building schools for girls in the remote regions of Pakistan. After hearing all this, the author knew that he couldn't just observe the man at work; he had to work as well. He had a terrible time pinning down the timeline of the story, however, because Mortenson had a fluid sense of time and the people he worked with had no tenses in their language. As a result, Greg was often maddingly late for appointments that made Relin fear he would have to abandon the project of writing about the man and his work. Many people outside his world called him unreliable. However, Relin soon realized that, as his wife Tara said, "Greg is not one of us." (pg. 4) He operated on Mortenson Time, and his techniques were unsettling and unconventional. He even gave Relin, once the author had agreed to do the book, a list of his enemies and encouraged Relin to talk to them. He remarked that they should have their say, because he and his crew had the results.

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So Relin followed Greg's advice and talked to all his enemies as well as his allies. He believes now that this story is a true collaboration – he wrote it, but Greg lived it. He knows also that Mortenson's Central Asia Institute has irrefutably been successful. Greg has single-handedly changed the lives of thousands of children and independently won more hearts and minds than all the official American propaganda flooding the region. As a result, to Relin, Greg is fighting the war on terror the way it should be fought. He offers every student he meets a balanced education rather than attend an extremist madrassa. We Americans, he says, can learn from our mistakes since 9/11 and do a better job of making our case to the great moderate mass of peace-loving people at the heart of the Muslim world.

CHAPTER ONE – Failure
Summary
This chapter begins with a description of K2, the world's second highest mountain. It is September 2, 1993, and Greg Mortenson is lost and alone. He had strayed from the main body of the glacier to a side spur that leads not westward but south into an impenetrable maze of shattered icefall. He should be paying more attention to the path he had taken, but this afternoon, his mind and heart is focused inward to something unfamiliar to him at this point in this life – failure. He fingers the necklace of amber bead in his pocket, the necklace that his little sister, Christa, had often worn. She had contracted meningitis in Tanzania as a child where their parents had been missionaries, and she had never really recovered. Despite her weaknesses, Greg had pressured his parents to allow her a measure of independence. He supported as much as he could until she died on her 23rd birthday from a massive seizure. Now he carries her beads as the most meaningful tribute he felt he could offer – climbing K2 and leaving her beads at the summit.

Greg had come shatteringly close to achieving his goal – within six hundred meters – and now he isn't sure he has the reserves to walk the last fifty miles down the mountain to the village of Askole. He is disoriented and can't remember how long it has been since he last saw a human being. He scours the trail for signs of humans in the garbage they would have left behind, but he sees nothing and he wonders how he has wandered to this spot. He has strayed eight miles up a deserted valley from the trail and now, the peaks around him don't even look familiar. He realizes that he will have to spend the night where he is and search for the trail in the daylight. He finds a flat slab of rock that seems stable enough, scoops snow into his empty water bottle, and wills himself not to focus on how alone and exposed he is. Ironically, he feels at ease, something he later attributes to altitude induced dementia, but people who know him will say that this night is just one more example of his steely-mindedness.

Now as Greg lays there in the cold, he decides to examine his failure. The leaders of his expedition were thoroughbreds at climbing. They are speedy and graceful as opposed to Greg who is slower and a bear of a man. He is six foot four and weighs 210 pounds. Because of his size, he takes on the role of pack mule, hauling food, fuel, and oxygen bottles to the high camps within six hundred meters of the summit. They have decided to choose the West Ridge the most circuitous, difficult route. After more than seventy days on the mountain, Mortenson and his friend, Scott Darsenay, have come to realize that their French teammate, Etienne, is in trouble. He has had to be helped from the mountain before for traveling too fast and not acclimatizing himself to the altitude. No one else came forward to help them get to Etienne even though they had made calls. So for two hours the two men rest and rehydrate and then pack their gear and go back out onto the mountain.

It takes them twenty-four hours to get to Etienne Fine, and they give up their own summit bid to bring the man out. As an emergency room nurse, Greg is able to give Fine the injections of Decadron to ease the pulmonary edema he has developed and then along with two other climbers who had brought Etienne as far as Greg and Scott's position. The already exhausted climbers then spend the next forty-eight hours dragging and lowering Etienne down the craggy rock faces. They finally make it with the ailing climber to their advance base camp. Unfortunately, the Pakistani high altitude helicopter could not bring him out, because of weather conditions. As

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a result, Greg and his friends are forced to take him down even further. He is eventually rescued and Mortenson and the others fall into the facsimile of sleep that high altitude inflicts on even the most exhausted.

Two of the climbers awaken and leave once again for the summit, leaving behind a note telling Greg and Scott to join them as soon as they feel recovered. However, the two men are without any reserves and they both find it a struggle to even walk. They must continue on down to the bottom of the mountain. Now, Greg is separated from help, having drifted off the trail, and he lies there in and out of consciousness. He decides that it is his body that has failed, not his spirit, but every body has its limits and he has reached his.

Notes
This chapter is the beginning of what will change Greg's life, but it is also the beginning of the story of a man who has great motivation and great desire to achieve for other people what he deems necessary for their lives. He is so extraordinary that he gives up his dream of honoring his sister to help another man live……..

OVERALL ANALYSES
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
Greg Mortenson - In order to properly analyze Greg, the reader needs to remember what his wife says about him, "Greg is not one of us." This statement is so completely true that it sets the reader aback at the truth of this man. He is compassionate, sincere, devoted, determined, driven, modest, intelligent to the point of genius, and beloved by the poor of Pakistan. He went to K2 in honor of his sister whom he loved so much, but he couldn't walk away from his failure to reach the summit, because the needs of the people of northern Pakistan resonated with him so strongly. He lived his own life of poverty for them and, for…..

Haji Ali - He is the nurmandhar of Korphe and gives Greg shelter after he is lost on the trails of K2. Greg is so grateful to the elder man for his compassion that when he sees the children of the man's village scratching lessons with a stick in the sand, he promises to build a school for the

Twaha - He is Haji's son and speaks some English, allowing Greg to speak with the man who will become his mentor until he learns to be fluent in Urdu. He is a happy man even though he lost his wife to childbirth several years before Greg arrives. He and Greg become fast friends and Twaha, who, like……..

Faisal Baig & Mouzafer Ali - These two men are the two most devoted and loyal followers of Greg, but also his bodyguards. They are symbolic of the poor of Pakistan who recognize that Greg is a saint who has come into their midst to achieve nothing but good. They constantly worry……..
Additional characters are analyzed in the complete study guide.

PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
This book tells the story of Greg Mortenson and his determination to build schools in Pakistan. It follows him from the moment he decides to climb K2 in his sister's honor and fails to reach the summit to his meeting with Haji Ali and the beginning of schools in Pakistan. This is followed by…….

THEME – THEMES ANALYSIS
The theme of **compassion** is the most prevalent theme. Greg's sincere and ongoing compassion for the poor of northern Pakistan flows throughout the book. He sees and understands that education is the answer to everything and feels he can make the lives of the people there better by building schools for them. He then engenders the same compassion in the people around him and that, of course, snowballs through the region. Compassion is never forgotten and the people of the Braldu will never forget Greg……
Additional themes are analyzed in the complete study guide.

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RISING ACTION

The rising action begins with Greg descending K2 alone and lost and then finding the village of Korphe where his life's work begins with his promise to build the village a ……

FALLING ACTION

The falling action comes in the form of Greg's progression in Afghanistan where he wants to ……

POINT OF VIEW

It is written in third person point of view from the perspective of David Relin who…….

OTHER ELEMENTS

FORESHADOWING

There are several literary devices that pop up at various times in the story. One of the most prevalent ones is **foreshadowing** which frequently presents clues of something that will happen later in the novel. Some examples of foreshadowing include:

1.) A man is crossing over the gorge in a box suspended above the river from a steel cable. He methodically pulling himself across the cable rather than spend the half day of walking upriver to cross the bridge above Korphe. However, even though this is the fastest way, it is also the most dangerous. This foreshadows the need of the village for a bridge and Greg's determination and success in building one…….

IRONY

Another element that is important to note is **irony** – when something happens, or is seen, or is heard that we may know, but the characters do not, or that appears opposite of what is expected. Some examples of irony include:

1.) It is a novel moment – an American named Greg Mortenson lost in Pakistan singing a German hymn in Swahili.
2.) It is ironic to the people of Korphe that these Punjabis fought so hard pry their land away from India, only to do so little for the people who live there……

QUOTATIONS – IMPORTANT QUOTES AND ANALYSIS

The following quotations are important at various points in the story, (Penguin Books, 2006):

1.) "Greg is not one of us." (pg. 4) This quote from his wife, Tara, reinforces the ultimate truth about the main character of this book.
2.) "There is a fierceness in their desire to learn, despite how mightily everything is stacked against them, that reminds him of Christa. He knows he has to do something." (pg. 32) This reinforces what Greg sees in the desire of the children of Korphe to learn and leads to his promise……

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

Other elements that are present in this novel are **symbols**. Symbols are the use of some unrelated idea to represent something else. Some examples of symbols include:

1.) Christa's beads symbolize Greg's determination to horn his sister.
2.) Greg, at the edge of the glacier, stoops to look at a flower, a five-petaled pink rosehip, and marks it as a return from eternal winter…….

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METAPHORS

Metaphors are direct comparisons made between characters and ideas. Some examples of metaphors in this novel include:

1.) Greg tells Haji Ali that he is going to build Korphe a school. He makes a solemn promise, not realizing that with these words, the path of his life detours down another trail, a route far more serpentine and arduous than the wrong turns he has taken since retreating from the K2. This makes the trails on K2 as a metaphor for his life…….

IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY

Title: *Three Cups of Tea*
Author: Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
Date Published: 2006
Meaning of the Title: It refers to the belief in Pakistan that if you are offered one cup of tea, you are a guest; if you are offered two cups, you have become a friend; and if you are offered three cups, it is as if you are a member of the family. Greg had earned all three cups from the people of Pakistan.
Setting: Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly, northern Pakistan known as the Braldu, the Baltoro, or Baltistan.
Protagonist(s): The protagonist is Greg Mortenson who takes on the humanitarian……

STUDY QUESTIONS / MULTIPLE – CHOICE QUIZ

1.) Greg decides to climb K2, because
    a.) he is invited by other Alpinists.
    b.) he wants to leave his dead sister's beads at the top.
    c.) it is a challenged he has looked forward to all his life.
2.) When Greg gets lost on the trail, he is brought to the village of
    a.) Korphe.
    b.) Skaldu.
    c.) Peshawar……

ANSWER KEY

1.) b 2.) a 3.) c 4.) a 5.) c 6.) c 7.) b 8.) b 9.) a 10.) c 11.) a 12.) c 13.) b 14.) a 15.) c

ESSAY TOPICS – BOOK REPORT IDEAS

1. Greg Mortenson grows up the son of missionaries in Tanzania, Africa. Explain how his life there impacted on what became his life's work……..

END OF SAMPLE MONKEYNOTES EXCERPTS

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