

# *The Honest Truth*

By Dan Gemeinhart

## **Annotation**

- Mark leaves home with only two things: a duffel bag and his dog, Beau. He's off on an adventure to climb Mount Ranier. Mark is sick, and he's sick and tired of the treatments he has to receive for his illness. This heart wrenching story is told alternately from Mark's point of view, and that of his best friend, Jessie, who's been sworn to secrecy about Mark's whereabouts. The book describes, in harrowing detail, Mark's journey and the worried anguish of his parents and best friend in a way that will keep middle grade readers in rapt attention through the last page.

## **Book Talk**

- Before his grandfather died, Mark promised him that he would climb Mount Ranier. What Mark didn't count on was the return of his debilitating illness. Now he's running out of time. He sets off with a duffel bag, a camera, his notebook, and his loyal dog, Beau, on an adventure full of danger and challenges that seem insurmountable. While his parents and best friend, Jessie, frantically worry, and the police search for him, Mark is determined to see this journey through....or die trying. If you are a fan of adventure, nonstop action, and heartfelt loyalty and friendship, then this is the book for you!

## **Book Trailers**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnyU1jiXQV8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIliVUxR9kE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAPxKOHuYE0>

## **Author on the Internet**

- Website: <http://dangemeinhart.com/>
- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/DanGemeinhart?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/DanGemeinhart?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dangemeinhartbooks/>
- Tumblr: <https://www.tumblr.com/tagged/dan-gemeinhart>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dangemeinhart/>

## **Items to use in a library display**

- Duffel bag; camera; notebook; photo of Mt. Ranier; empty prescription bottle

## **Book Club Discussion Questions/Topics**

- Early in the story, Mark breaks his grandfather's pocket watch. How is this significant in the story and symbolic of what's going on in Mark's life?
- The author tells the story from two points of view: Mark's personal experience, and the perspective of Jessie and his parents. How does this affect the story?
- Mark is beaten up by a group of teenagers early in his journey. How do you think that affected Mark's attitude, and the rest of the journey?

- Mark and his dog, Beau, depend on each other throughout the adventure. How do you feel about Mark's putting Beau in danger? How might the story have been different if he did not bring Beau along?
- Mark encounters several adults along the way. Though they are suspicious of his traveling alone, only Wesley discovers the real reason for what Mark is doing. Why do you think the other adults Mark met didn't do more to help him?
- Loyalty is a major theme in this book. Discuss examples of loyalty throughout the story.
- Jessie has to decide whether to tell Mark's parents where he is and what he's doing. Do you agree with her decision? How might the story have changed if her decision had been different?
- Jessie and Mark communicate through haiku poems. Why do you think they like communicating that way? How might it be challenging or difficult to record feelings and observations that way?

### First Line of the Book:

- "The mountain was calling me. I had to run away. I had to."

### Non-Fiction Companion Title(s)

- *Just Don't Fall* by Josh Sundquist
- *Childhood Cancer Survivors* by Nancy Keene, et. al.
- *Mountain Climbinb-Action for Kids* by Steffen Kjaer

### What to Read Next

- *The Survivorship Net* by Jim Owens
- *Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie* by Jordan Sonnenblick
- *Peak* by Roland Smith

### Other Books by this Author:

- *Some Kind of Courage* (2016)

### Additional Resources

- Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSz16ngdsG0>
- Poetry:
  - <http://hellopoetry.com/words/2672/climb/poems/>
  - [http://www.poetrysoup.com/poem/the\\_climb\\_711092](http://www.poetrysoup.com/poem/the_climb_711092)
  - <http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/son-died-of-cancer-goodnight-our-hero>
- Interview with the author: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Req8x\\_w48I0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Req8x_w48I0)
- Book Study: <https://kbakerdoyle.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/finalhonesttruthprojectforweb-1.pdf>
- Lesson ideas:
  - <http://howtoteachanovel.blogspot.com/2015/04/teaching-theme-in-literature.html>
  - <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/The-Honest-Truth-by-Dan-Gemeinhart-a-CCSS-aligned-close-reading-novel-study-1911809>

- o <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/The-Honest-Truth-book-unit-1682172>