

Interpretation of chapter 6 of touching the void



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this chapter of touching the void Simon is faced with a horrible decision; Should he sever the rope holding Joe and possibly kill him in the process, saving himself, or should he keep the rope attached, whilst his stability on the mountain decreases by the second as it crumbles beneath him, in the hope that Joe will find some way to take the weight off him. Bearing in mind his oblivion as to Joe's predicament this is a very hard choice to make. One which ordinary people couldn't even imagine having to decide.

Alone for the first time on the freezing mountain, having just made a life-threatening decision, it is easy to imagine that having a good night's sleep would be burdensome. Simon dips in and out of consciousness. Simon is not upset that he possibly killed Joe, he describes him as only the weight gone off from my waist so suddenly and violently that I couldn't fully grasp it all. This shows that Simon is trying not to think of Joe as a real human who he possibly killed. The adjective violently has connotations of pain and murder, which could suggest that Simon is subconsciously making himself the bad guy.

After a long night tossing and turning, Simon wakes up feeling surprisingly refreshed, ready to complete his descent and determined that he won't spend another night on the mountain, this combined with his state of dehydration leaves the reader believing that his journey on the mountain is to end soon; he will either die of dehydration or climb to the foot of the mountain before the day is done. When Simon tells the reader that I felt watched it is probably because having convinced himself that by cutting the rope he is acting almost like a criminal whose crime yet undiscovered is feeling excessively paranoid. Alone on the mountain without Joe, Simon is

fabricating beings out of the stillness, almost as if to keep him company and break his climb down in solitude. This is displayed when he says I knew it, and they knew it. The verb knew is a common verb yet is none the less an interesting choice of language as it has connotations of certainty it shows that, at the time Simon believed his fate to be ensured.

In the morning when Simon recalls that he dressed like a priest before mass, with careful ceremony. It brings compares extremes, shedding new light on the situation. The simile used is conveying a message of goodness as priests are supposed to be messengers of God, who behave perfectly. Whereas the creator of the simile was at that moment anything but good, for he believes that he killed an innocent man. The design of the simile is to cast a bad light on poor Simon and is strategically placed to do just that.

Simon wakes in the morning to find the past days event a distant dream he says The dread in the night had gone with the dawn this suggests that he is putting the incident behind him in order to continue with the more important task ahead. He even states the dark thought-wracked hours behind me the word dark combined with the fact it is behind him suggests he has freed his mind of any lingering guilt and is finally ready to finish what he and Joe started what seems like years ago.