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Peak of No Return – Detailed Solution

Would you like to find out more about the historical background and connections in UNDO – Peak of No Return*? Below are the details for all of your decision options for each of the Story cards as well as additional information about all the people involved.*

A Reminder: What Truly Happened

The aging mountaineering star, Theo Wallner, organized a climbing expedition to a 20-thousand-foot peak in the Himalayas. Most of the group were amateur climbers who joined for various reasons from all over the world.

Early on, the young English flower child, Elisabeth "Ray" Mandeville, and the older arms magnate, Ronald D. Taylor from the USA, had a falling-out on the plane to Kathmandu. By chance, seated next to Taylor was Australian Amanda Bail. Although he didn't recognize her at the time, she recognized him from a long-ago affair, but decided to keep it secret. He had ruined her life by pressuring her into an abortion that left her barren.

Shortly before setting out from Kathmandu, the young Irishman, Finn McMullin, surprised the Sherpa, Sonam, in the pack animal stall as he was rummaging through mountain guide Theo's pack. Sonam believed Theo owed him money from a previous climbing tour. When he noticed Finn, he fled, dropping Theo's diary to the ground.

Finn found Theo's diary. Theo was his idol and he was planning to create a photo documentary about him. But when he scanned through Theo's diary, he was shocked to discover that Theo, unable to bear his decline in strength and fame any longer, was planning to commit suicide on this expedition by overdosing on his medications.

Chung Lian, a Chinese biologist in her late 30's, reached her physical limits in the first few days of the climb. When she picked up a holy Mani stone, Sonam became upset. He had lost a prior climbing expedition due to an accident in the mountains that he believed was due to angry spirits.

Lian was searching for a rare poisonous plant for an ancient Chinese medicine recipe. By the time she found the plant, she had gone without her snow goggles for too long. She also realized she had reached her physical limits and was falling ill.

The following day, Lian was plagued by a violent fever and could hardly see due to snow blindness. Afraid that she would not survive the coming night, she searched through her containers of collected herbs for one that would help reduce her fever.

Knowing that she also had a poisonous herb in the containers, she asked her tent-mate Ray for help. Due to miscommunication and the fact that she was high, Ray chose the container with the poisonous herb. Lian died from it. The group assumed Lian died from her fever and continued their journey in dismay.

After a sudden cold snap, Theo had to admit to himself and the group that the climb should be abandoned. He considered this supposed weakness to be another confirmation of his waning abilities. When Ronald reproached him for being weak, it pushed him over the edge, and he ended his life with a drug overdose that night.

Against Sonam's objections, the group all agreed they wanted to continue their climb without Theo. Ronald never believed in giving up on anything and his cancer wouldn't allow him a second opportunity. Ray wanted to pursue freedom and a bigger high. Finn was smitten with Ray and didn't want to lose her. And Amanda, who once received a momentous photo award for pictures she didn't take, wanted to prove she had the right to be an award-winning photographer and therefore was absolutely set on photographing the rare snow leopard.

Sonam reluctantly agreed to lead them as he didn't want to lose a second expedition. When Amanda finally spotted her snow leopard and Ronald's unending chatter threatened her goal in life a second time, she silenced him with a death threat. Ronald then recognized who she was and was afraid she would seek revenge. In a panic, he pretended to try to stop her from falling over the precipice but pushed her over instead.

At the peak, Sonam struggled with his fate. His family rejected him because they superstitiously blamed him for the deaths of the people who had died around him. As this was his second expedition with fatalities, he begged for a divine sign. When none was forthcoming, he committed suicide.

The situation worsened for the three remaining climbers while descending through a crevasse due to hunger, cold, and the many deaths. When Ronald, the arms magnate, made sexual overtures to the hippie Ray, her lover Finn, knowing that Ray hated the American for his arms dealing during the Vietnam War as well as his disgusting manner, went crazy and pushed him into the abyss.

Finn later suffered remorse for Ronald's murder and wanted to turn himself in to the police. Ray didn't want any part of it as Finn was only a quick fling for her. That night, when Finn slipped and fell hanging over the chasm, Ray cut the rope between them and let him fall. On the one hand, she was afraid of being dragged down with him and on the other hand, she didn't want to face the police.

As the sole survivor, Ray feared they would search for her and then blame her for the tragedy. She fled to the underground hippie mecca in Goa, India to disappear. On the train, she read that she was also believed to be dead. Relieved, she arrived in Goa to start a new life the¬re under her newly assumed name "Alex."

Character Biographies

A: Ronald D. Taylor, Salesman, Age 58 (Born 1914, USA)

Ronald Taylor nicknamed "Ron" was a powerful arms dealer from Texas. He made a lot of money during the Vietnam War. He was always looking for new challenges to feed his insatiable ego. When he learned he had incurable cancer, his ego was shattered. This mountaineering expedition was a final gesture to demonstrate his virility to himself and everyone else.

Ron and Amanda (*see E*) once knew each other when they were both much younger. He had been her boss at the time and the two of them had an affair. He had assured her he would leave his wife, but the promise was never kept. When Amanda revealed she was pregnant, he pressured her to have an abortion. Afterwards, he broke off the affair because he didn't want to risk leaving his marriage because his wife knew too much about his dirty business dealings.

It was a fluke that the two of them met on this trip. Ron didn't even recognize Amanda on the plane. Only much later on the way to the summit did he realize that she had been his former lover.

B: Elisabeth “Ray” Mandeville, Hippie, Age 29
(Born 1943, England)

Elisabeth called herself „Ray“ because she had an image of herself as a positive and radiant personality. She was a total free spirit. Pursuit of happiness was everything for her, including never saying no to drugs.

Ultimately, she was seeking her place in life. She wanted freedom and strove to break through the barriers she had felt since childhood. She held great resentment and contempt for the narrow-minded, conservative, capitalistic world and its wars.

When Finn (*see G*) fell in love with her during the expedition, Ray enjoyed the flirtation but didn‘t take it too seriously. It was just another casual fling for her.

C: Chung Lian, Biologist, Age 39 (Born 1933, China)

Lian was self-absorbed and an excellent biologist. Her worldview was based on science and she disdained religion as superstitious.

She joined the expedition because she was looking for a rare, lethal plant that was an ingredient in an ancient recipe and only grew in the heights of the Himalayas. A discovery of this kind would be a significant breakthrough for traditional Chinese medicine.

Lian had already noticed that she could hardly keep up physically at the beginning of the expedition, but her love for her homeland drove her on. Eventually, she developed a deadly fever.

D: Sonam, Sherpa, Age 31 (Born 1941, Nepal)

The name “Sonam” meant “happiness” in Nepalese, but the name didn’t seem to fit this young man. When he was still a teenager, there were a number of deaths in his village community. The villagers blamed Sonam for causing this misfortune and expelled him.

Sonam joined the Sherpas whose people often worked as guides and climb support in the mountains. There, like all newcomers, he held a lower status and was referred to as “Khamba.” Once, when a member of a mountaineering expedition being led by Sonam died, he managed to cover it up in order to maintain his reputation.

On another Himalayan expedition, Sonam met the expert mountaineer Theo (*see F*). When Theo offered to hire him for the current expedition, Sonam accepted the offer even though he thought Theo still owed him money.

Sonam was deeply religious and held great respect for holy sanctuaries and wrathful spirits.

E: Amanda Bail, Photographer, Age 46 (Born 1926, Australia)

Over 20 years ago Amanda had an affair with Ron (*see A*) who was her boss at the time. She became pregnant and he pressured her to have an abortion, which left her barren. This had crushed Amanda because she had always wanted to have a family with children.

Afterwards, Amanda left to start a new life. She turned her hobby into a profession and became a wildlife photographer. A few years later, she was caught in the middle of the Indonesian massacre. By chance, she came into the possession of the war photographer Connor McMullin's camera when he was fatally wounded. He was Finn's father (*see G*). Afterwards, Amanda published his photos under her own name and received a prestigious photo award, which led to a new crisis in her life.

Ever since, she's been driven to prove to herself she could take her own award-winning photo. She'd been pursuing this goal for many years now. This is what led her to Nepal to photograph a rare snow leopard.

It was pure chance that Amanda met Ron on this expedition. Although she recognized him on the plane, she refrained from speaking with him because he obviously didn't recognize her.

It was sheer coincidence that Finn McMullin was also on the same expedition. Amanda had no idea that Finn was Connor's son and she never found out.

F: Theo Wallner, Mountaineering Expert, Age 48 (Born 1924, Austria)

Theo was once a celebrated mountain climbing adventurer. But now his fame was gone. He struggled a lot with the fact that hardly anyone knew him anymore. That's why he recently began leading mountaineering expeditions as a guide – to regain fame and admiration.

However, Theo has also been in pain for many years due to the extreme demands the mountaineering expeditions have placed on his aging body. He was afraid that he wouldn't even be able climb a summit soon. His plan was to make this his last expedition. Secretly, at the top of the summit, he planned to take an overdose of his medication.

This plan made Theo melancholic and depressed during the expedition, which sometimes led to bitterness, disrespect, and antagonism. At least, Theo's self-esteem was assuaged when he learned that Finn McMullin (*see G*) wanted to create a photo documentary about him on this last expedition. Finn was the son of his friend Connor, who had died some years earlier.

Theo knew the Sherpa Sonam (*see D*) from a previous expedition and hired him again for his last tour. He was unaware that Sonam believed that Theo owed him money.

G: Finn McMullin, Photographer, Age 25 (Born 1947, Ireland)

Finn's father Connor McMullin died in Indonesia in 1965 when he was documenting the great massacre there as a war photographer. Despite his tragic death and to preserve his memory, Finn set his mind on following in his father's footsteps by becoming a photographer.

When he was a child, Finn knew the mountain guide Theo (*see F*) because he was his father's friend. The charismatic Austrian had left a lasting impression on him. That's why Finn decided to accompany Theo on this expedition in the Himalayas in order to create a photo documentary about him.

Right at the beginning of the expedition, Finn fell madly in love with Ray (*see B*), who was 4 years older than him. She was happy to have a fling with him and didn't take it as seriously as he did.

Finn wasn't aware that fellow expedition member Amanda (*see E*) was in Indonesia with his father when he died or that she had taken his camera. And he never found out.

Details for all Decision Options

1: Houston, Texas, USA, July 4, 1948, in the evening

A: If Ron had chosen the child, his divorce from his wife would have been nasty. Her testimony regarding his business dealings would have put him in jail for a long time. He would have blamed Amanda and probably would have never met his child. Amanda would have left town to become a wildlife photographer the same as in Option B.

B: This is what actually happened. Amanda accepted Ron's shameful offer. The abortion left her barren, which denied her the chance to have children for the rest of her life. A few months later, Ron ended their relationship and Amanda left to start a new life as a wildlife photographer.

C: Leaving Ron on her own terms would have changed Amanda's life and given her more independence. She wouldn't have become a wildlife photographer and therefore would never have joined this expedition. (Save person E: Amanda)

2: On the outskirts of Djakarta, Indonesia, October 29, 1965, at night

A: This is what actually happened. Amanda was convinced she couldn't save Connor and fled with his camera. However, she published his photos using her own name and won a prestigious photo award a year later. Independently, Finn decided to become a photographer.

B: If Amanda had tried to save Connor's life, she could have done so because he hadn't been hit in any vital organs. Connor would have recovered, thus preventing his son Finn's desire to follow in his dangerous footsteps. Finn would never have been a photographer and would not have joined the expedition. (Save person G: Finn)

C: If Amanda had fled without the camera, nothing would have changed for Finn and the result would have been the same as Option A.

3: In an airplane over Nepal, April 22, 1972, sunrise

A: After such an emotional outburst, Ron would have immediately recognized Amanda. And after she threatened to kill him, he wouldn't have been thrilled to be on the same mountaineering expedition with her for several weeks. After landing in Kathmandu, he would have canceled this expedition immediately and booked another expedition to avoid Amanda. (Save person A: Ronald)

B: Without a response from Amanda, Ron would have believed that Amanda hadn't recognized him. As a result, he would pretend he hadn't recognized her either, so there wouldn't be any problems during the expedition. This means nothing would have changed for the expedition.

C: This is what actually happened. After Amanda realized the man next to her was her former lover Ron, she had to deal with many different feelings inside. That's why she avoided a confrontation with him at this point.

4: Kathmandu, Nepal, at 4,300 feet, April 24, 1972, dawn

A: Theo's notebook would have been of great value for Finn's documentary about him. But Theo most likely would have noticed the theft. This option wouldn't have changed anything about Theo's planned suicide.

B: Theo's plan was to use the rest of his medication to kill himself at the summit. If Finn had stolen his medication, Theo's plan would have been foiled. (Save person F: Theo)

C: This is what actually happened. Theo entered the barn and saw Finn holding his notebook. His suspicion that Finn might have taken it out of his pack was quickly dispelled by Finn, as the two knew each other well. Finn told Theo he suspected it might have been Sonam tampering with his pack because the person he saw was short.

5: A mountain village, Nepal, at 6,900 feet, April 27, 1972, in the afternoon

A: It's as simple as it sounds: if Sonam had turned back due to his dread of the supernatural, he would not have died later. (Save person D: Sonam)

B: If Sonam had taken the stone away from Lian due to his dread of the supernatural, it would have led to a loud argument that everyone would have noticed. Theo would have blamed Sonam for the argument, which would have wounded Sonam so deeply he wouldn't have said another word. However, this would have changed very little about the rest of the expedition.

C: This is what actually happened. Lian picked up a holy Mani stone and moments later her legs were swept away and she fell to the ground. Whether it was the act of angry spirits or whether Lian had just stumbled by accident, we leave up to your own imagination ....

6: A waterfall, Nepal, at 10,500 feet, April 28, 1972, in the morning

A: If Lian had shown the snow leopard tracks to the others it would have been a very exciting discovery, especially for Amanda as she really wanted to take a photo of this animal. She would have urged the group to hurry. However, nothing would have changed for Lian.

B: An old woman digging up caterpillar mushrooms would have been very exciting for Lian. The caterpillar mushroom was a very popular ingredient in Chinese medicine. Lian would have spoken with the woman and her interest in the woman's knowledge would have led her to leave the group in order to stay with the woman and document it. (Save person C: Lian)

C: This is what actually happened. Lian actually discovered the poisonous plant she was looking for on the expedition. She stored it in a small container and labeled it with her waterproof pen, which ran dry after this use.

7: In bivouac, Nepal, at 11,500 feet, April 29, 1972, late in the evening

A: If a strong gust of wind had opened the tent flap rather than Ray, it would have allowed cold air to blow into the tent giving Lian a chill. She would have passed out and would never have woken back up.

B: Lian had labeled the container with the life-saving medicinal herb that morning with a water-soluble ink pen because her waterproof pen had run dry the day before. As a biologist, Lian knew ink had a sour taste and therefore, she could have found the container with the medicinal herb by licking the labels. (Save person C: Lian)

C: This is what actually happened. Lian asked Ray for help. But Ray was high on drugs, which made it difficult for her to understand what Lian wanted. Inadvertently, Ray gave Lian the container with the poisonous herb. Lian didn't realize it and thought she was taking the medicinal herb that she needed. Shortly thereafter, Lian died from the poison.

8: In a farmhouse, Nepal, at 13,800 feet, May 1, 1972, after nightfall

A: If Theo had stood alone outside under the clear starlit sky, it would have deepened his depression and he would have felt like a failure. In this state, he would have gone ahead and taken the pills he had planned to use at the summit. Although a deep grief would have run through him at first, he ultimately would have felt liberated. And with this feeling of release, Theo would have freely surrendered himself – falling easily into the depths of the abyss.

B: This is what actually happened. Theo was deeply depressed by the humiliating situation. He swallowed the pills he had planned to use for his last moments on the summit and went to sleep in bed. He never reawakened.

C: Finn had seen the pain in Theo's notes and felt that Theo had lost hope. Had he asked Theo to speak with him, he would have given his idol new hope. Theo would have discarded his plan for suicide. (Save person F: Theo)

9: A mountain ridge, at 15,750 feet, May 8, 1972, in the afternoon

A: If Ron had never recognized Amanda, he would never have pushed her over the edge. She would have fulfilled her dream by shooting a unique photo of the snow leopard. (Save person E: Amanda)

B: This is what actually happened. Ron suddenly realized who the photographer was: Amanda, the woman he had rejected. It couldn't have been a coincidence; she definitely was out to take revenge on him! He panicked and with lightning speed he gave a warning call and threw himself at Amanda as if he was trying to protect her. Instead, he deliberately pushed her over the edge.

C: The leopard's scent would have made the mules nervous causing them to kick out in all directions. Since Amanda was standing right next to them, she would have been kicked and would have plunged into the depths.

10: A peak, Nepal, at 20,000 feet, May 13, 1972, in the morning

A: In Buddhism, the lotus is a sign of enlightenment. If Sonam had seen a lotus flower in the clouds, it would have been the very sign that he had hoped for and it would have deterred him from his plan. (Save person D: Sonam)

B: This is what actually happened. Sonam wasn't a Christian and so wouldn't find any significance in such an image. Since he didn't see a meaningful sign, he left the group and committed suicide.

C: The bizarre footprint would have been easily recognized as the hoofprints of several pack animals that passed over the same spot. With no discernable sign for Sonam, nothing would have changed for him.

11: A crevasse, Nepal, at 17,000 feet, May 14, 1972, dusk

A: Ron would have been very careless if he tried to get closer to Ray. He would have slipped. Ray loathed him, so she didn't help him and simply watched him plunge over the side. In her opinion, the world was a better place without him and his weapons.

B: This is what actually happened. Finn had had enough and lashed out. Believing that the woman he loved despised the American and that he was a murderer, Finn became a murderer himself and pushed Ron into the deep crevasse.

C: If Ray had slipped, Finn would have ignored his anger for Ron and would have tried to save Ray as quickly as possible. This would actually have saved Ron's life. (Save person A: Ronald)

12: A rock face, Nepal, at 14,100 feet, May 15, 1972, at night

A: Ray wouldn't have been strong enough to hold on with Finn dangling on the rope. She would have lost her balance and fallen into the abyss with Finn. (Death of person B: Elisabeth)

B: This is what actually happened. Ray was obsessed with her freedom, so it was out of the question for her to face the police. And, she had grown tired of Finn. She instinctively felt Finn's weight would drag her into the abyss if she tried to hold him, so she cut the rope and Finn fell into the abyss.

C: After the rope was cut, if Finn had been able to use his last bit of strength to grab a root, he wouldn't have fallen all the way the to the bottom of the abyss and would have survived. (Save person G: Finn)

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