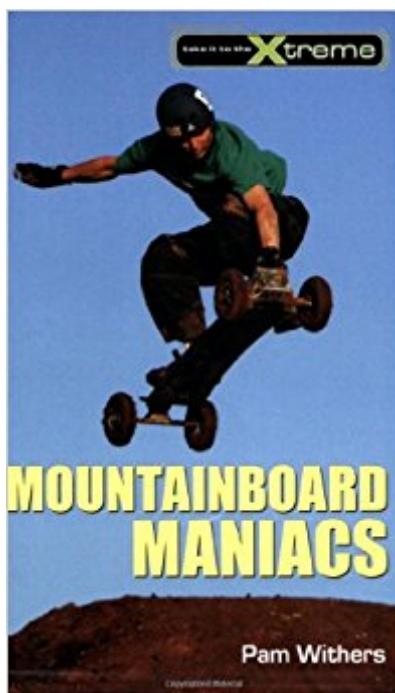


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Mountainboard Maniacs (Take It To The Xtreme)



Synopsis

Adventurous best friends Jake and Peter discover an exhilarating new sport. Pam's books have wide appeal to boys and girls, to avid and reluctant readers, to teens and to younger children who are looking for a challenging high-interest book! -- The Bookmark Fifteen-year-old best friends Jake and Peter love trying out new extreme sports and competing with each other. Whether they're on surfboards, snowboards or dirt bikes, they always stumble upon adrenaline-pumping adventure. Now Jake and Peter discover mountainboarding and decide it's one of the best free-ride sports around. They set off to bomb down slopes on what looks like a snowboard with spring-loaded wheels. When a junior-guide training trip promises action on three of the Pacific Northwest's largest mountains, Jake and Peter shrug off the fact that all are sleeping volcanoes that could erupt at any time. Things heat up when at least one of the mountains begins rumbling, and matters get even more complicated by Peter's secret agenda, Jake's inner turmoil, and the arrival of two girls and a nasty senior guide. Readers will remain at the edge of their seats as they find out whether Jake and Peter can get the group down the mountain alive in *Mountainboard Maniacs*, the explosive finish to Pam Withers' *Take It to the Xtreme* series.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 15 years

Grade Level: 7 - 10

Customer Reviews

Pam Withers' best-selling series combines her passion for outdoor adventure with her journalism

career. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including the New York Times and Adventure Travel magazine. She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Exam White chalk screeching against a blackboard at the front of a dead-quiet classroom. A beam of brilliant sunlight bursting through dark, heavy clouds outside. That's what lake Evans would remember about the moments leading up to the chaos that brought about the first stage of his downfall. It was the calm before the storm, even though the thunder and rain had only just stopped. Jake could smell the chalk from where he sat. As it squeaked against the board, it trickled flecks as dry and powdery as fine ash; it made his nose tickle. His usual teachers used the whiteboard. He was sitting in an aisle desk near the front of the classroom at his school in Chilliwack, British Columbia. The aisle position gave him a slight advantage for what was about to unfold. He'd only glanced out the window at the cloud break for a second. He was concentrating very hard on Nancy Sheppard's chalk. It was forming the words "final exam," and he was feeling pumped. He knew he was going to ace the test; all the students knew he was going to. He wasn't cocky about being this class's top dog, or about being the teacher's pet. That wasn't part of his personality. It's not as if he was a brain in any other classes. It's just that at that particular moment-sitting there watching the word "final exam" take form-he was calm, primed, and wrapped in confidence. The pride before the fall, his mother would say. Then the chalk fell from Nancy's hand, her mouth opened wide, and out came that word, the one that rattled Jake's confidence. "Explosion!" For a split-second everyone just sat dumbly at their desks, staring at their teacher as she waved her arms wildly at the door. "Get out!" Nancy shouted louder, eyes wide. "File out to the parking lot, now!" Jake felt a bolt of adrenalin lift him out of his desk and hurl him down the aisle toward the door at the back of the room. Soon a dozen other students were stampeding behind him in the same direction, screaming, pushing, jostling, crushing one another in their race to be first out of the building. Jake's fast reaction time put him at the head of the pack. Years of doing extreme sports gave him that advantage. He looked left, right. Nothing but the empty, potholed gravel schoolyard, still damp from the rain shower. Then he looked twenty-five yards ahead at the parking lot and drew in his breath. He counted six bodies sprawled in unnatural poses on the dark, steamy tarmac. Only one was moving: a skinny, red-soaked figure dragging its lower body with the help of ragged jerks from its twisted upper body. Jake powered his long legs into an all-out sprint. Just as he reached the disaster scene, the crawling student -- a boy he knew -- collapsed into a stunned heap. "Stay calm," Jake told himself as he drew near. "Just figure out who needs help first" He stopped and squatted beside the closest student, a girl lying on her back, as the crowd behind him caught up and ran to other

victims. Her eyes were closed and her face was as white as Nancy's chalk. He could see no wounds or obvious injuries, yet when he bent his ear over her mouth, he could feel no breath. Quickly, his fingers reached for the place on her neck where he'd feel her pulse. "Nothing," he muttered soberly to a boy kneeled nearby who was going through the same motions on another still body. "Same," the boy said solemnly, eyes large. "Leave them," Jake ruled, springing up and glancing about, trying to take in the whole scene at once. "You sure?" his classmate asked, looking hesitantly from the body he'd just declared dead, to the girl's body, to Jake. "Yes!" Jake shouted, already on his way to the figure that had stopped crawling seconds before. "They're dead, Todd! Nothing we can do for them!" What kind of explosion had it been, anyway? The guy who had been crawling only seconds before was definitely bleeding, Jake realized as he took a deep, steadying breath. Plus his hair looked as if it had been combed from the ends to the roots. His face and T-shirt were scorched black where they weren't stained red. Worse, where portions of his shirt had been burned away, the skin beneath was an even more shocking red. The boy had every right to be screaming, but he was barely whimpering as he lay on the wet blacktop, shivering and trying to focus on the crowd around him. "He's burned," Jake declared as his mind raced through everything he'd read on what to do with burn victims. A circle of faces turned up to Jake expectantly. Nancy was nowhere in sight. "Cover the burns with clean dressings. Don't touch them or they'll get infected. Give him a drink of water and watch he doesn't go into shock before the ambulance gets here," Jake said. "He should be first into the ambulance." "How will we know if he starts to go into shock?" one of the onlookers asked another, but before anyone could answer, a high-pitched shriek sounded from the far end of the parking lot. Jake recognized the voice as the scream traveled like a knife tip from his eardrum to his brain. His feet flew toward the sound of his best friend, Peter Montpetit. "This one's got several broken bones," a girl called from his left. Jake turned his head, saw she was referring to a boy who was blinking and moaning. Jake slowed, but his feet refused to change direction. He thought he could see Peter sitting up, swaying from side to side, one hand clutching a shoulder as if it was about to fall off. "Is he conscious, Lila?" Jake asked the girl. His head swiveled toward her but his body was already a few paces past her. "Yeah -- barely," Lila replied, a tremor in her voice. "What do I do?" "Leave him for later. Go help with the burned guy," Jake snapped, pouring on speed as Peter's cries went hysterical. Peter's screeches were singeing Jake's nerves. He knew he wouldn't be able to focus on anyone else until he calmed his friend down. Peter never, ever screamed. Jake should know. The two had grown up together, and they were both into sports and adventure. They had tried almost every extreme sport around. Their mothers liked to joke they'd used up all their nine lives long ago. Their latest fanaticism was

mountainboarding: careening down hills at up to sixty miles per hour on what looked like a snowboard on wheels. They considered the scrapes and bruises no big deal. Jake and Peter loved living life to the extreme. But hollering like a banshee? Never. Jake's legs felt as hollow as his throat by the time he reached Peter. He tallied up the disaster scene's casualties. Two dead, one badly burned, one with broken bones but conscious. And Peter, who sounded pretty bad. Where was Nancy? Wait. There had been six bodies. Jake did a quick side glance to check out the last figure: a girl being helped to her feet near Peter. She looked like a poster child for road rash: seriously bloody scrapes and bruises all over. But the kid was talking to her helpers, a good sign. "Anything broken? How bad are the cuts?" Jake gestured impatiently to the kids around the standing girl while he still made a beeline for Peter. "Nope. Lots of scrapes, but nothing deep," someone answered. "Then leave her. Help me with Peter here, or go help the burned guy," he suggested. They nodded and began moving away from the girl, even as her sobs increased. Jake placed a trembling hand on the shoulder of his blond, curly-haired friend. "Peter, what's wrong?" "Noooo!" Peter screeched, batting Jake's hand away as if he'd just stuck a finger into a deep wound. Then his eyes rolled back in their sockets and he wavered as if about to pass out. His screams turned to sobs. "Peter! Is something broken? What's going on?" Jake half-expected to see a bone end sticking right out of Peter's shoulder and a geyser of blood. Jake had never, ever seen Peter cry. Peter could suck it up better than anyone he knew. "What's with him?" a girl asked. "We've been trying to help him, but he won't let us near him." "Peter, you have to tell me what's wrong, or at least quiet down. I'm going to check you over?" Peter's sobs turned to gasps as Jake lifted his shirt. Nothing. No blood, burns, or scratches. Still, might be internal bleeding. Something that could put Peter into shock any second. People can die when they go into shock. That much Jake knew. Unlike most of his classmates, he'd had lots of first-aid training. As a junior outdoor guide for the local outfitter, Sam's Adventure Tours, he was required to have that kind of stuff under his belt. And he'd used it, more than once. So had Peter, a junior guide with Sam's company, too. Jake knew his training meant he shouldn't be feeling rattled here in a school parking lot after some kind of explosion -- even if two people were dead and Peter was badly injured. But he was rattled, Jake realized as Peter's eyes rolled again. "Make sure he's the second one into the ambulance," Jake pronounced. But none of the students around replied. They were studying someone behind him. Jake looked up to see Nancy standing over him, shaking her head. Her dark eyes fixed on him, revealing a level of disappointment he'd never seen before. His heart sank even before she spoke. "The boy with the multiple fractures has died," she told him solemnly. "He went into shock right after you passed him to help Peter. He and the burn victim should have been your top

priorities. Peter has nothing but a dislocated shoulder and an overactive set of lungs, isn't that right, Peter?" Peter grinned as the six supposed victims of the pretend explosion jumped up and wandered over. "That's right, and I'm the best actor in this first-aid class, right? Sorry about psyching you out, Jake old buddy, but nice to know you care." Peter punched Jake's shoulder playfully. Jake felt like punching him back, hard enough to give him a real dislocated shoulder. His bellowing had thrown Jake off. But it wasn't Peter's fault that Nancy was gi...

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