**A Week in the Woods by Andrew Clement**

**Chapter 10 Summary**

**“Trial and Error”**

Mark didn’t forget what he had decided in the barn on Friday night. He was going to be the new and improved kid. On Monday, he asked Leon to drop him at school a little early. It was a cold morning, so all the kids had to wait for the bell to ring at the gym. Mark saw a group of five fifth-graders and he walked towards them with a friendly face. When he got there, the conversation stopped. Mark smiled and said “*Hi, guys*”. Most of the kids nodded back. One of them said, “*Um, hi*”. But nobody said anything else, so Mark had to speak again. He said, “*Lots of snow this weekend*”. The other boys looked at each other and then at Mark. Jason, a tall kid, said, “*You figure that out yourself, or did the butler tell you?*” The other kids laughed or smiled. Mark felt his face start to color, but he knew this was a test, so he looked at the smart kid (Jason) right in the face and replied, “*Actually, I figured it out because the gardeners were up all night using the snow blowers to clear off the tennis courts. I always play a couple of sets of tennis in the morning before school*.” He was being sarcastic; he didn’t have any gardeners, butler or tennis court in his house. One of the kids thought he was serious about what he said, so Mark let them all know the truth. He told them he was actually snowshoing and that was how he figured it out. He also asked about when the snow started to melt and they all started talking back at him and telling theories about how long it takes the snow to melt off in New Hampshire. They also talked about snowshoing and snowmobiling, which they thought it was great. He felt like one of them. He picked up a couple of names too: Jason (the one that mad the butler’s joke), the tall guy was Adam, and the one who snowmobiled was Ed. When the bell rang, they all started walking to their classrooms. Jasong looked at Mark and said, “*See ya ‘round*”, and Mark felt he meant it. He thought he could actually make friends.

Getting to a better relationship with his teachers was another matter. First, he had Reading Comprehension class with Mrs. Stearns. This time he didn’t stared out the window. He took out his pen and paper and started working. He finished quickly, so he took out his Jack London book and started reading another story. Mrs. Stearn didn’t like that. She took the book away and gave him more work. Mark couldn’t understand why she didn’t like him to read if he had done all his work, and why she decided to give him more work. Therefore, Mark decided not to do the extra work and stared out the window for the rest of the class. When the class was over, he took his book back and left.

Then he had Social Studies class with Mrs. Farr. The class began with a discussion about the Civil War. Mark hadn’t read but he thought Mrs. Farr’s questions weren’t very hard. She asked about where it all had begun. Mark raised his hand and answered, but Mrs. Farr told him his answer wasn’t correct. Then Mark corrected her, and gave a whole explanation about how Fort Sumter was where the war started but not where the first battle took place, it was in Manassas. Mrs. Farr looked uncomfortable and told the class to remember that it happened at Fort Sumter for the test. She kept leading the discussion, but she never called Mark again, even though he had his hand up for almost every question. He gave up.

Math an English weren’t any better. He tried to be part of the class and to pay attention, but those classes were pretty boring. He wasn’t being challenged. He should be in the gifted program.

He finally had Science class with Mr. Maxwell. He made one more attempt. He paid attention and raised his hand; after all, he knew all the answers. However, Mr. Maxwell seemed to look right through him. Therefore, Mark decided to stop trying. At the end of the class, Mark gave Mr. Maxwell the permission sheets for A Week in the Woods, hopping that would make him smile. However, Mr. Maxwell didn’t smile. He had already judged Mark. He thought Mark was spoiled, disrespectful and ungrateful. There was nothing Mark could do to change his mind. At least not for a while.