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

**Chapter 11 Summary**

**Spring**

Marks parents came back home on March 10th. He had a chance to show his mom how he snowshoed before the snow melted. His parents seemed to enjoy their visit in the country. Every afternoon, they spent time with him. They just had to answer to some business phone calls in the evening, especially his dad. His parent also enjoyed Mark’s guided tour around the property every night. However, when Mark told them all about his night in the old barn, his mom seemed alarmed. She didn’t like it. His dad, on the other hand, thought it was a brave thing to do and he congratulated him for that.

His parents asked him about his friends, but Mark told them he didn’t hang up with them much because they lived closer to town. He also got in a discussion with his mom because he asked him if his friends’ families were nice, which irritated Mark. Then she changed the topic and asked Mark about the week in the woods, and they ended up talking about the trip they had taken to Aspen two winters ago, and how nice it would be to repeat it. Mark enjoyed having his parents around, and even though he wouldn’t admit it to anyone, the thing he enjoyed the most was bedtime, when his mom pulled the covers up around him and bent down to kiss his cheek. It was the perfect ending for a day.

The worst part about having his parents around was how it cut into his time. Mark had learned that he liked being on his own. Leon and Anya had gotten used to having him disappeared into the woods or the barn for a whole morning or an afternoon after school. His mom got worried if he was gone for more than half an hour. Still, after they had been home for ten days, Mark felt bad when his mom told him that they had to take a trip to Europe that was going to last 3-4 weeks. Mark had been expecting it, but that didn’t make saying goodbye any easier.

At the end of March fifth-graders started counting down the days before their trip to the state park. Mr. Maxwell, on the other hand, started preparing the kids for the trip in their science class. They studied about the different kinds of trees, the different kinds of rock formations, and the way that ice and plants and time can turn rock into soil. They studied how different plants grow at different altitudes, about the way rain and melt water collect to form springs and streams, and about the kinds of animals that live in and around the White Mountains. Mark already knew all this material by heart, but for the first time science class had Mark’s full attention. He thought Mr. Maxwell was terrific! Every day after school Mark went home and out into the woods or up into the ridge and saw firsthand all the things Mr. Maxwell had talked about in class.

On Friday, April third, when he got home from school, Mark sat in the kitchen and had a snack as he tried to persuade Anya to let him camp by himself in a clearing he had found in the woods. Anya refused; Mark’s mom had told her not to let him spend the night by himself ever again. Mark ended camping with Leon, who showed him how to scrape out a fire pit with a hatchet and then line it with small rocks and ring it with bigger ones. They also pulled down some deadwood and chopped it. Leon taught Mark how to chop. They made their beds under the open sky, Leon on one side of the fire, Mark on the other. They also cooked their own dinned over the campfire. By the time the fire had burned down, Mark was glad Leon had come along.