·composition of the initial summit
ı could not be made cavalierly, nor
the others' concurrence, for this
. She told her team that the first
ɜ three women and they would go
· 14 and 16. A second attempt, by
:, would follow two days later, and
still wanted a stab at the summit

l that the numbers did not add up.
ras unlikely to materialize, and even
shot. After a Himalayan expedition
mmit, Chadwick knew, the momen-
:ely. The summit climbers are spent,
ıble, and descent becomes the men-
s expeditions had reached the sum-
:h case it was only the first pair who

ıink all the members of the team—
has left—should have a reasonable
: argued. The first two teams totaled
t about the rest of us?" worried
ld have some guarantee of being on
ve risked their lives doing carries to
ıat the second party consist of three
ɔa, and that a third try should be ele-
nite. Blum responded that she could
tempt, let alone a third. If anybody
nit trip was the price for continuing
hute in support of others, said Blum,
rrying supplies to Camp 3.
n with their own objections. A tribal
they had become a standard compo-
expeditions, experienced and condi-
ɔse strength and tenacity had been





indispensable to many ascents. Blum had considered dispensing with them to make hers a truly female force. When reality had intervened in that plan, she had sought to employ two women, or Sherpanis, along with three Sherpas for the high-altitude climbing, but no Sherpanis had been available. Now the Sherpas she had employed announced that they, too, wanted to reach the summit. It was a matter of pride, but they also wanted to enhance their reputations for future expeditions.

Lopsang Tsering was the *sirdar*, the head Sherpa, and he urged that the first summit group be made up of one woman and one Sherpa, arguing that the smallest, best-suited party was most likely to succeed. He also contended that a single team would be enough: "Too many people going to the summit. Annapurna is very dangerous. When one member and one Sherpa reach summit, then we are all very happy and go home." Blum resisted, explaining that all on her team have been dreaming of the summit, but he insisted: "You are leader. . . . You must tell your members that everyone cannot climb mountain."

The weather was holding, and Blum announced the first team: Irene Miller, Vera Komarkova, and Piro Kramar. Combining the earlier concept of distinct second and third teams with two women each, Blum announced that the final team would consist of the other four women who still want to try for the summit, plus Sherpas Chewang Rinjing and Mingma Tsering. Privately, Blum was prepared to allow one of the Sherpas onto the first team if circumstances dictated, and she so instructed the team.

The summit-bound women reached the high camp at 24,200 feet, just half a mile below the summit. They had asked Rinjing and M. Tsering to accompany them there, and, knowing that, if they asked one Sherpa to try the summit with them, he would insist the other come as well, they now invited both to make the final ascent.

The three women rose at 3 A.M. on October 15 and spent four hours preparing for the final ascent. In stepping outside to