In “Top Man,” a group of hikers is trying to summit Mount Kalpurtha (also known as K3). The story includes the conflicts of man vs man, man vs self, and man vs nature. Towards the end of the story Nace has to make the choice of whether or not he will go after Osborne and risk his life to save him. The second is man against man. Osborne and Nace do not get along very well because Nace wants to do things carefully and slowly and Osborne wants to do things the fastest way. The third is man against a power higher than himself. The mountain is a much bigger power than Nace or Osborne and they both want to climb it for different reasons.

In this story, the conflicts of nature vs man and man vs man permeate through the age difference between Osborn and Nace. Nace is the older, more experienced mountain climber, and Osborn is younger, and tends to be more rash. The conditions, according to Nace, are not very well suited for climbing, and he describes the experience he had with an old friend, who died trying to summit K3 because the conditions were poor. The reason I am using this story in my anthology is because it clearly demonstrates the fact that the power of nature is greater than that of an individual man. Osborn has a conflict with Nace about whether or not they should continue up the mountain, and Nace decides that they should stop and turn around. But Osborn keeps going by himself. When Osborn does not return to the camp, Nace goes after him. The argument of this story is that nature is always more powerful than any individual human, but with age and experience, people can learn how to read nature and react to conditions.