



Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster

By Jon Krakauer

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Now available in paperback comes the bestselling adventure book by Jon Krakauer, the acclaimed author of *Into the Wild*. When disaster struck during his ascent of Mt. Everest, killing eight climbers, Krakauer survived by luck, skill, and discipline. Now, he has written the definitive account of this headline-making tragedy. Illustrations.

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Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster By Jon Krakauer Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Intrinsically irrational" is how Jon Krakauer characterizes the compulsion to climb Mount Everest in his audiobook *Into Thin Air*. The highly publicized fates of the May 1996 Everest expeditions, including the tragic loss of 12 lives, seem to bear out Krakauer's statement. Listening to Krakauer read his own account of the events in this unabridged version adds a uniquely intimate and thought-provoking dimension to the tragedy. Although Krakauer reads his account with journalistic professionalism, it's impossible to forget that you are listening to someone unburdening himself of a great weight, an unburdening that sometimes nearly approaches a confession.

Since the 1980s, more and more "marginally qualified dreamers" have attempted the ascent of Everest, as guided commercial expeditions have dangled the possibility of reaching the roof of the world in front of anyone wealthy enough to pay for the privilege. In 1996, *Outside* magazine asked Krakauer, a frequent contributor, to write a piece on the commercialization of Everest, and Krakauer signed on as a member of New Zealander Rob Hall's expedition. The disastrous outcome of the 1996 expedition forced Krakauer to write a very different article.

Those who read Krakauer's book may wonder whether the audiobook can possibly shed more light on the unfortunate events. It does. Krakauer's chronicle is chilling and horrifying. He recounts with excruciating detail the physical and mental cost of such a climb. Even under the best of circumstances, each step up the ice-clad mountain is monumentally exhausting, and the oxygen-deprived brain loses the ability to make reliable judgements. And on May 10, 1996, when Hall's expedition and several others made their summit assault, the conditions were far from ideal. The mountain was so "crowded" that climbers had to wait their turn near the summit while their bottled oxygen dwindled by the minute. By afternoon a blinding hurricane-force storm had stranded a number of climbers on the highest, most exposed reaches of the mountain.

By writing and reading *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer may have hoped to exorcise some of his own demons and lay to rest some of the painful questions that still surround the event. He takes great pains to provide a balanced picture of the people and events he witnessed and gives due credit to the tireless and dedicated Sherpas. He also avoids blasting easy targets such as Sandy Pittman, the wealthy socialite who brought an espresso maker along on the expedition. Krakauer's highly personal inquiry into the catastrophe provides a great deal of insight into what went wrong. But for Krakauer himself, further interviews and investigations only lead him to the conclusion that his perceived failures were directly responsible for a fellow climber's death. Clearly, Krakauer remains haunted by the disaster, and although he relates a number of incidents in which he acted selflessly and even heroically, he seems unable to view those instances objectively. In the end, despite his evenhanded and even generous assessment of others' actions, he reserves a full measure of vitriol for himself. (Running time: 467 minutes; six tapes)

From School Library Journal

Heroism and sacrifice triumph over foolishness, fatal error, and human frailty in this bone-chilling narrative in which the author recounts his experiences on last year's ill-fated, deadly climb. Thrilling armchair reading. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

This unabridged recording, read by the author, is a "must have." Other reviewers have raved about the

unbelievable but true account of Krakauer and his journey to the summit of the highest peak in the world, Mt. Everest (e.g., Audio Reviews, LJ 9/15/97 and LJ 12/97). Krakauer, an experienced climber, was expected to chronicle the thrill of a lifetime participation in a guided expedition (underwritten by Outside magazine) to an astounding 29,028' above sea-level. He shares the history, the personalities, the emotion, and the grueling physical acclimatization of the most deadly season ever (May 1996) to reveal the horror that ensues after a blizzard strikes the precipice, ultimately killing nine people from four different expeditions (all climbing to the top on the same day). If your library has not purchased either of the other recordings, this rendition will appeal to the sports enthusiast as well as the dedicated audiophile. Kristin M. Jacobi, Eastern Connecticut State Univ., Willimantic

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Emmanuel Young:

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to be aware of everything in the world. Each publication has different aim or even goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. These are reading whatever they consider because their hobby is reading a book. How about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, man feel need book after they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you'll have this Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster.

Dana Barker:

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Alan Sarno:

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