

Into Thin Air *by* Jon Krakauer



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When Jon Krakauer reached the summit of Mt. Everest in the early afternoon of May 10, 1996, he hadn't slept in fifty-seven hours and was reeling from the brain-altering effects of oxygen depletion. As he turned to begin the perilous descent from 29,028 feet (roughly the cruising altitude of an Airbus jetliner), twenty other climbers were still pushing doggedly to the top, unaware that the sky had begun to roil with clouds...*Into Thin Air* is the definitive account of the deadliest season in the history of Everest by the acclaimed Outside journalist and author of the bestselling *Into the Wild*. Taking the reader step by step from Katmandu to the mountain's deadly pinnacle, Krakauer has his readers shaking on the edge of their seat. Beyond the terrors of this account, however, he also peers deeply into the myth of the world's tallest mountain. What is it about Everest that has compelled so many people--including himself--to throw caution to the wind, ignore the concerns of loved ones, and willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense? Written with emotional clarity and supported by his unimpeachable reporting, Krakauer's eyewitness account of what happened on the roof of the world is a singular achievement. *From the Paperback edition.*



Reviews of the [Into Thin Air](#) by Jon Krakauer

Tolrajas

Who can better convey the insanity of ascending 8.8 km vertically than a survivor giving us a first hand account? Jon Krakauer brilliantly gave us his poignant and introspective personal experience in *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*, a severe cautionary spotlight on the fallibility of commercialising altitude chasing madness. Beautifully written, a great advantage because Jon is an experienced journalist and he is himself a mountaineering enthusiast. After watching the film version "Everest", Jon's heart wrenching and comprehensive journal filled all the missing gaps the film couldn't convey. The majority of readers, like me, who are weak willed couch potatoes, and who abhor the discomfort of living in nature and physical hardships, can nevertheless appreciate the fleeting joys of mountaineering by these insane and intrepid mountaineers, who must pay the heavy price of excruciating struggle both physically and mentally to attain their egoistical vertical endeavours while leaving behind the filth and corpses marking their passing. Only extreme masochists can overcome the immense hardships and obstacles to attempt, not just climbing mount Everest, but all activities that go beyond the comfort zone of the body's physiology. Many paid the highest price possible, their lives and bottomless sorrow for their relatives. Its interesting that Jon, at the end of his harrowing and heart breaking experience, he did not tell the world to stop climbing to heights where the air is so thin that it does great harm to body. Instead he advocated climbing with the the aid of supplemental oxygen. But ironically, his account of the Everest ascent showed that logistics in getting the oxygen tanks to the climbers are so difficult and can easily go awry. How does one defy Murphy's law when precious lives are at stake under blizzard and subzero conditions? Even when full tanks of oxygen were available, they were mistaken as empty tanks because the brain deprived of O2 for too long cease to function lucidly. Even with survivors from the jaws of Everest, one may end up losing their limbs or other protruding body parts to frostbite. So seriously folks, nothing gets more serious than the question of life or death or courting with the dangerous side of fate. The bottom line to life's pursuits is when we need extra gear to do life threatening stuff that contributes nothing to mankind, it is most certainly nature's way of telling us 'Don't'. Not heeding the risk endanger not only the perpetrator's life but also the lives of others attempting to save him. And please stop defiling Everest. Lets keep nature pristine as it should be.

Voodoogore

Into Thin Air s such a riveting read that it deserves five stars, and a permanent place on my overcrowded shelves.

However, I must note that the book itself - or rather, the Outlook article which was responsible for Krakauer's presence on this expedition in the first place - is the real reason so many people died on the mountain that day. Had the expedition leaders not been competing for the attention of Outlook readers, this probably would not have happened; they were seasoned veterans of the mountain and would not, I am sure, made such an elementary mistake as not turning back by the agreed hour. This proved fatal for several people. Krakauer, to his eternal shame, tried to blame this debacle on the other group's Russian guide. Who, as he admits, went out in a blizzard on his own to save his clients and brought them down single-handed. And showed a lot more empathy than Krakauer himself.

That said, I have read no book on mountaineering that better describes the emotions and physical sensations of being in this punishing environment. f you want a powerful 'Rashomon' tale for our times, read this book in tandem with Anatoli Boukreev's /Weston DeWalt's *The Climb*. They depict the same story but with a very different perspective, and the story itself never gets anything less than fascinating.

Umor

I was inspired to read *Into Thin Air* just recently based solely on Jon Krakauer's comments about the upcoming Everest movie, having suggested people read his book instead. Although I wasn't initially

sold by an author promoting his own book, and slighting a movie he hadn't profited on, it did pique my interest in the events that transpired in 1996 and the magazine article that preceded. I found the article absolutely riveting, breezing through in one sitting. I spent the following few days seeking out everything else I could find published about the incident, at which point I decided to do as Krakauer instructed. The book was exceptional; I couldn't put it down and finished it in two sittings over two days. I would highly suggest finding/reading the PDF article from Outside Magazine online first...if you like that, you will love the book.

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