

Into Thin Air

A Personal Account
of the Mount Everest Disaster

Jon
Krakauer



VILLARD

Praise for Jon Krakauer's
INTO THIN AIR

“A book that offers readers the emotional immediacy of a survivor’s testament as well as the precision, detail, and quest for accuracy of a great piece of journalism. ... It is impossible to read this book unmoved.”

—ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

“Brilliant, haunting.... This is an angry book, made even more so by the fact that hardly anyone seems to have learned a thing from the tragedy.”

—SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

“Every bit as absorbing and unnerving as his bestseller, *Into the Wild*.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“A searing book.”

—OUTSIDE

“Krakauer is an extremely gifted storyteller as well as a relentlessly honest and even-handed journalist, the story is riveting and wonderfully complex in its own right, and Krakauer makes one excellent decision after another about how to tell it.... To call the book an adventure saga seems not to recognize that it is also a deeply thoughtful and finely wrought philosophical examination of the self.”

—ELLE

“Krakauer introduces the many players until they feel familiar, then leads the reader with them up the mountain and into the so-called ‘Death Zone’ above 25,000 feet.”

—SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

“Time collapses as, minute-by-minute, Krakauer rivetingly and movingly chronicles what ensued, much of which is near agony to read.... A brilliantly told story.”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

“[Krakauer] proves as sure-footed in prose as he was on the mountain ... quietly building the suspense as we follow the ill-fated expedition through its preparation and shakedown forays, and then delivering a lucid, blow-by-blow account of the cataclysmic storm and the death and agony following in its wake.”

—THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

“*Into Thin Air* reads like a fine novel—the main characters breathe their way through a plot so commanding, the book is hard to put down.”

—AMAZON REVIEWS

“Make room on your shelf for mountaineering classics.... Krakauer’s grip on your emotions will leave you gasping for breath.”

—LOS ANGELES TIMES

“[A] riveting account of events leading to the death of guides Rob Hall and Scott Fischer, assistant Andy Harris and two clients.”

—BOSTON HERALD

“[A] gripping analysis of the tragedy.”

—THE TENNESSEAN

“*Into Thin Air* is the ... intense, taut, driving account of what happened. It is an engrossing book, difficult for the reader to put down ... superbly reported.”

—ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

“Astounding ... honest ... eloquent.... Through objective and thorough research and in sparkling prose, Krakauer tells a story that arouses fury, disgust, admiration and tears.”

—THE TIMES-PICAYUNE (NEW ORLEANS)

“Meticulously researched and exceptionally well-written, *Into Thin Air* avoids the hype and easy condemnation that have infested other accounts. The book offers instead vivid details told matter-of-factly, almost quietly. The result is a deeply moving narrative that honors the courage of the people on the mountain while

raising profound and possibly unanswerable questions about human behavior in a crisis.”

—NASHVILLE BOOK PAGE

“Jon Krakauer offers fresh insights into the tragedy in his superb *Into Thin Air*, in which he adroitly sifts through the misunderstandings, miscalculations and misguided zeal that led his fellow climbers to their doom. His new book is, on every level, a worthy successor to his outstanding *Into the Wild*.”

—THE PLAIN DEALER

“A taut, harrowing narrative of the most lethal season in Everest’s history ... Krakauer offers a disturbing look at how technology, publicity, and commercialism have changed mountaineering.”

—WISCONSIN STATE-JOURNAL

“Just as he did in his previous book, the acclaimed *Into the Wild*, Krakauer employs exhaustive reporting, attention to detail, and a crisp, unpretentious writing style to shape the story.”

—HARTFORD COURANT

“The intensity of the tragedy is haunting, and Krakauer’s graphic writing drives it home.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

“[Krakauer] has produced a narrative that is both meticulously researched and deftly constructed.... His story rushes irresistibly forward.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

“Though it comes from the genre named for what it isn’t (nonfiction), this has the feel of literature: Krakauer is Ishmael, the narrator who lives to tell the story but is forever trapped within it.... Krakauer’s reporting is steady but ferocious. The clink of ice in a glass, a poem of winter snow, will never sound the same.”

—MIRABELLA

“Every once in a while a work of nonfiction comes along that’s as good as anything a novelist could make up ... *Into Thin Air* fits the bill.”

—FORBES

“Deeply upsetting, genuinely nightmarish.... Krakauer writes indelibly.... He’s brilliant.... His story contains what must be one of the essences of hell: the unceasing potential for things to become worse than you fear.”

—SALON

“*Into Thin Air* is a remarkable work of reportage and self-examination.... And no book on the 1996 disaster is likely to consider so honestly the mistakes that killed his colleagues.”

—NEWSDAY

“Jon Krakauer combines the tenacity and courage of the finest tradition of investigative journalism with the stylish subtlety and profound insight of the born writer. His account of an ascent of Mount Everest has led to a general reevaluation of climbing and of the commercialization of what was once a romantic, solitary sport, while his account of the life and death of Christopher McCandless, who died of starvation after challenging the Alaskan wilderness, delves even more deeply and disturbingly into the fascination of nature and the devastating effects of its lure on a young and curious mind.”

—ACADEMY AWARD IN LITERATURE
CITATION FROM THE AMERICAN
ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS

ALSO BY JON KRAKAUER

Iceland
Eiger Dreams
Into the Wild
Under the Banner of Heaven

JON KRAKAUER
INTO THIN AIR

Jon Krakauer is the author of *Eiger Dreams*, *Into the Wild*, *Into Thin Air*, *Under the Banner of Heaven*, and *Where Men Win Glory*, and is the editor of the Modern Library Exploration series.

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JON KRAKAUER



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For Linda;

*and in memory of Andy Harris, Doug Hansen,
Rob Hall, Yasuko Namba, Scott Fischer, Ngawang
Topche Sherpa, Chen Yu-Nan, Bruce Herrod,
Lopsang Jangbu Sherpa, and Anatoli Boukreev*