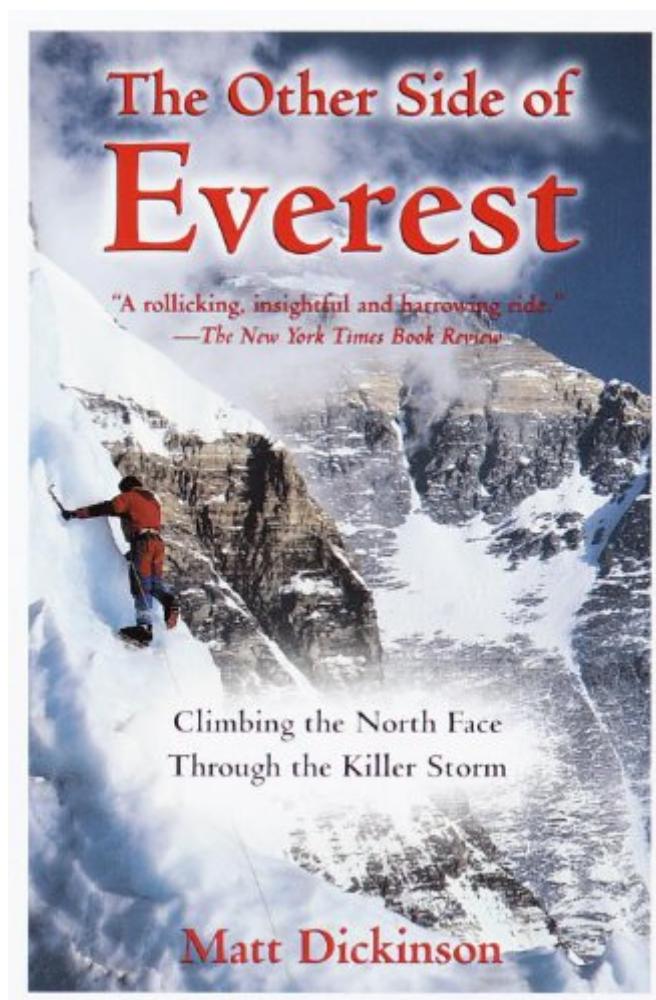


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The Other Side Of Everest: Climbing The North Face Through The Killer Storm



Synopsis

May 1996 began like most other climbing seasons on Mount Everest. The arrival of spring brought the usual pre-monsoon period, with teams of hopeful mountaineers ready to reach for the roof of the world. Among the dozens of climbers were Jon Krakauer and Anatoli Boukreev (who would both later write their own accounts of what followed) and Matt Dickinson. But on May 10, with ten different expeditions strung out along the mountain, the usual turned deadly. Suddenly, the temperature dropped from merely frigid to 40 degrees below zero. A killer storm with howling winds swept in and climbers were soon blinded in white-out conditions. Before it was over, the blizzard would claim a dozen lives, the worst loss of life in the modern history of climbing on Everest. Dickinson, an adventure filmmaker, was part of an expedition challenging the treacherous North Face of Everest, on the Tibetan side. Of the nearly 700 people who have scaled Everest since the first ascent in 1953, barely 230 have managed to ascend via the colder and technically more difficult route up the North Face. In addition to climbing through the storm, which would test him beyond his imagining, Dickinson also filmed the ascent. He and his team watched in awe as violent clouds gathered over the mountain and swept them all up in a frightening white force. Dickinson was a relative novice who had never climbed at this crushing altitude, and the storm preyed on his mind, throwing into question his entire mission. Despite this uncertainty and the treacherous conditions, Dickinson and his partner Alan Hinkes continued their climb, compelled to reach the summit. Dickinson's first-person narrative--the only account of the killer storm written by a climber who was on the North Face--places the reader amid the swirl of the catastrophe, while providing rare insight into the very essence of mountaineering. The Other Side of Everest is a portrait of personal triumph set against the most disastrous storm to ever befall the world mountaineering community. Anyone who has ever pushed beyond familiar limits of physical and psychological endurance will cherish this book.Â From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Wow, this story is riveting. The detail is splendid, much more than any other Everest books I've read. I felt that I'd climbed this mountain right beside Matt! And good grief, the descent as well. I looked up photos on the web to grasp the route, the Steps and ridge; who does this for fun? It seems utterly impossible.

Great account of climbing Mt. Everest with a detailed look at what it's like to be on the mountain from someone who was new to scaling an 8000-meter peak and never really expected to end up there. With Dickinson's skilled recounting of many small day-to-day details, this book really helps the reader visualize what it's like to be there. One of my favorite Everest books.

This book is well written and quite enjoyable. Facts and authors' comments are well balanced, and there's plenty of good British humour. As drawbacks I would like to name the following: 1. The subtitle is misleading, since the author's group did not summit Everest during the storm of May 10th; they did this on May 19th, more than a week after the storm. 2. Unfortunately, M.D. repeats Krakauer's absurd accusations of Anatoli Boukreev's who, according to J.K., was "dressed too lightly," "had to use oxygen" etc. At the same time, the author's own description of Rob Hall's death leaves the reader little doubt that had Boukreev stayed on top instead of quickly returning to the camp, he would most likely had to stay with dying Scott Fisher and die with him the same way Rob Hall could not leave Doug Hansen and died next to him. Such scenario also would have resulted in most certain death of climbers in the "dogpile" who were otherwise saved by Boukreev (except for Yatsuko Namba). Well, as one reviewer of "K-19" movie pointed out, "Nobody needs heroic

Russians."3. The illustrations in the book are B/W, which is so 60s.

I am fascinated by what happened to climbers on May 10 1996 on Everest. This book provides a view into the events of that day but from the perspective of an expedition on the North side. On the same day that 8 climbers died in a storm, the author was busy filming a documentary that started going wrong when its subject fell victim to "mountain sickness" and the author had to step in to save the film. It is a riveting tale of that disastrous day from another perspective.

For anyone who has been to the Himalayas, the descriptions of the conditions ring true. It is a very harsh, inhospitable environment, and even trekkers up to Everest base camp sense that feeling quickly along with marvelling at the awesome scenery. The misery of trying to function in the face of the debilitating effects of altitude and weather are a reality that Everest climbers have to deal with routinely. Dickinson gives the reader a good feel for these conditions as well as the impact of the technical aspects of the route on a relatively inexperienced mountaineer. It was a little depressing to read of a storied route up the mountain with abandoned camps and debris not to mention corpses. The story also points out the pure survival nature of operating in The Death Zone and the fine line between making it back and disaster. At the same time, it reinforces the admiration and respect for the early Everesters who accomplished so much with the crudest of equipment not to mention the work of the Sherpas who are the real unsung heroes of these accounts.

I'm not a climber, but after reading Into Thin Air I wanted to find out what the northern side of Everest was like. Dickinson describes the harrowing ordeal of climbing the North Face with details that made me feel I was there. He doesn't make judgments about people or situations; he simply tells the story. If you like true adventure tales, you'll enjoy this book.

This story never gets any less riveting, no matter how often it's told and retold. The nightmare of that May week in 1996 must be permanently etched into the brains of everyone who was there, and I find it interesting to read these different accounts by different people who lived through that awful ordeal. You know the outcome, but it's still a page-turner.

Matt tells an engaging tale of his climbing experience. I liked his selfless and down to earth style. The reason I choose to read the book is to gather more perspectives on the North Col before I climb it in April; thus, I might have been a more captive audience. Regardless, I am sure most readers

who like climbing or expedition stories will enjoy Matt's perspective.

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