

into thin air by jon krakauer

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer: A Harrowing Tale of Everest's Deadly Climb

into thin air by jon krakauer is not just another mountaineering book; it is a gripping, firsthand account of one of the most tragic events in the history of Everest expeditions. Published in 1997, this non-fiction masterpiece captures the harrowing experience of climbers who faced nature's brutal forces atop the world's highest peak. Krakauer's narrative goes beyond a simple recount of events, delving deep into the human psyche, the challenges of high-altitude climbing, and the complexities of commercial expeditions that have since transformed Everest into a crowded and perilous endeavor.

The Genesis of Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer

Jon Krakauer, a seasoned mountaineer and journalist, originally set out to write a feature article for Outside magazine about the commercialization of Everest. At that time, the mountain had become accessible to more climbers than ever before, thanks to guided expeditions that promised a chance to summit without the extreme risks of solo climbing. Krakauer joined the 1996 Everest expedition led by Rob Hall, hoping to capture the essence of this new era in mountaineering.

What he found instead was a perfect storm of misjudgments, severe weather, and human error that culminated in a deadly blizzard on May 10-11, 1996. Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer chronicles these events with raw honesty, detailing the struggles of climbers as they battled oxygen deprivation, exhaustion, and freezing conditions.

Understanding the Context: Mount Everest and Its Challenges

Before diving deeper into Krakauer's narrative, it's important to understand why Everest is such a formidable mountain. Standing at 29,029 feet (8,848 meters), Everest presents unique challenges:

- **Extreme altitude:** The "death zone" above 26,000 feet is where oxygen levels are insufficient to sustain human life for long periods.
- **Unpredictable weather:** Sudden storms and temperature drops can turn a routine climb into a life-threatening situation.
- **Technical difficulties:** Climbers must navigate treacherous icefalls,

crevasses, and steep ridges.

- **Physical and mental stress:** The combination of physical exertion and hypoxia can impair judgment and performance.

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer vividly illustrates how these factors played a pivotal role in the 1996 tragedy, underscoring that even the most experienced climbers are vulnerable.

The 1996 Everest Disaster: A Detailed Account

The Expedition and Its Key Players

Krakauer's expedition was one of several on Everest that spring, but it became infamous because of the disaster that unfolded. Key figures included:

- **Rob Hall:** The respected New Zealand guide and leader of Krakauer's team.
- **Scott Fischer:** Another prominent guide leading a rival expedition.
- **Andy Harris and Yasuko Namba:** Team members who faced tragic fates during the storm.

The book explores the dynamics between these climbers and their guides, highlighting the pressures they faced to reach the summit despite warning signs.

The Deadly Blizzard and Its Aftermath

The crux of Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer centers on the unexpected storm that struck as climbers were descending from the summit. The blizzard resulted in multiple fatalities and left survivors fighting for their lives in near-zero visibility and subzero temperatures. Krakauer recounts moments of heroism, miscommunication, and the sheer will to survive that defined those critical hours.

Insights into the Commercialization of Everest

One of the most compelling aspects of *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer is its critique of the growing commercialization of Everest expeditions. Krakauer questions whether the influx of inexperienced climbers, motivated by adventure tourism rather than mountaineering expertise, has increased the risks on the mountain.

The Pros and Cons of Guided Expeditions

Guided climbs have made Everest accessible to a wider audience, but Krakauer points out several issues:

- **Overcrowding:** Too many climbers on the mountain at once can create bottlenecks at critical points, increasing danger.
- **Pressure on guides:** Leaders may feel compelled to push clients to summit despite hazardous conditions.
- **Inadequate experience:** Some clients lack the necessary skills or fitness, relying heavily on guides.

These insights remain relevant today, as Everest continues to attract adventurers worldwide, prompting ongoing debates about safety and ethics.

The Writing Style and Impact of *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer

Krakauer's writing is notable for its clarity, vivid descriptions, and emotional depth. As both a participant and observer, he blends journalistic objectivity with personal reflection, making the narrative compelling and authentic. Readers often find themselves transported to the icy slopes, feeling the climbers' physical exhaustion and mental turmoil.

Moreover, *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer sparked widespread discussion about mountaineering safety, expedition management, and the human cost of chasing extreme goals. The book has been adapted into documentaries and films, further cementing its place in adventure literature.

Lessons from *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer for Aspiring Climbers

For those interested in high-altitude climbing or adventure sports,

Krakauer's account offers invaluable lessons:

1. **Respect the mountain:** No summit is worth risking lives unnecessarily; understanding the environment is crucial.
2. **Prepare thoroughly:** Physical conditioning, acclimatization, and proper gear are non-negotiable.
3. **Listen to experts:** Guides and experienced climbers often have critical insights that can save lives.
4. **Know your limits:** Pride and ambition should not override common sense and safety considerations.

These takeaways resonate beyond Everest, applicable to any challenging endeavor where risk management is key.

Why Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer Remains a Timeless Classic

More than two decades after its publication, *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer continues to captivate readers because it blends adventure, tragedy, and human drama in a way few books can. It transcends mountaineering circles, appealing to anyone interested in the complex relationship between humans and nature.

The book's honest portrayal of failure, survival, and ethical dilemmas prompts readers to reflect on what it means to pursue dreams in the face of overwhelming odds. Krakauer's ability to convey the raw emotion and stark realities of Everest makes *Into Thin Air* a must-read for adventure enthusiasts and literary audiences alike.

By immersing yourself in Krakauer's narrative, you not only learn about the physical challenges of Everest but also gain insight into the enduring spirit of exploration—and the sobering costs it can entail.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of 'Into Thin Air' by Jon Krakauer?

The central theme of 'Into Thin Air' is the harrowing experience of survival and the dangers of commercializing high-altitude mountaineering, focusing on

the 1996 Mount Everest disaster.

Who is Jon Krakauer in relation to the 1996 Mount Everest expedition?

Jon Krakauer is a journalist and mountaineer who was part of the 1996 Mount Everest expedition and wrote 'Into Thin Air' based on his firsthand experiences during the disaster.

What major event does 'Into Thin Air' document?

The book documents the deadly 1996 Mount Everest expedition, during which a severe storm caused the deaths of eight climbers.

How does Krakauer portray the commercialization of Mount Everest in the book?

Krakauer critiques the commercialization of Everest, highlighting how inexperienced climbers were led by guides into dangerous conditions, contributing to the tragedy.

What role does the 1996 storm play in 'Into Thin Air'?

The 1996 storm is a pivotal event that leads to chaos, disorientation, and multiple fatalities among climbers caught on Everest during the ascent and descent.

How does 'Into Thin Air' explore human endurance and decision-making in extreme conditions?

The book explores the limits of human endurance, the impact of physical and mental exhaustion, and how critical decisions under pressure can determine life or death outcomes.

What controversies arose from the publication of 'Into Thin Air'?

The book sparked controversies regarding Krakauer's portrayal of other climbers and guides, with some accusing him of bias and misrepresentation of the events and participants.

How has 'Into Thin Air' influenced public perception of high-altitude mountaineering?

'Into Thin Air' brought widespread attention to the risks and ethical

dilemmas of commercial Everest expeditions, influencing public awareness and mountaineering practices.

What literary style does Jon Krakauer use in 'Into Thin Air'?

Krakauer employs a first-person narrative style combining journalistic reporting with vivid, personal storytelling to convey the intense and tragic events on Everest.

Additional Resources

****Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer: A Critical Examination of Everest's Deadliest Climb****

Into thin air by Jon Krakauer stands as one of the most compelling and harrowing accounts of high-altitude mountaineering disasters. Chronicling the tragic events of the 1996 Mount Everest expedition, Krakauer's narrative transcends mere adventure writing, offering a meticulous investigation into the deadly combination of human error, commercial pressures, and the unforgiving forces of nature. As a journalist and experienced climber, Krakauer's firsthand perspective provides readers with an insightful, albeit somber, look into the perils that define the world's tallest peak.

Context and Background of Into Thin Air

The book emerged from a catastrophic expedition in May 1996, during which eight climbers lost their lives amid unexpected storms and logistical breakdowns. Krakauer, hired by Outside magazine to report on the commercialization of Everest expeditions, found himself embroiled in the disaster. His account not only details the physical and psychological challenges faced by climbers but also raises critical questions about the ethics and safety of guided climbs on Everest.

The 1996 tragedy marked a turning point in mountaineering history, illuminating the consequences of overcrowding, inexperienced climbers, and the growing influence of profit-driven tour operators. *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer became a seminal work, often cited in discussions about the risks associated with high-altitude adventure tourism.

Analytical Breakdown of the Narrative

Krakauer's storytelling is marked by an investigative rigor that balances personal narrative with objective reportage. His writing style is precise yet

evocative, capturing the beauty and terror of Everest with equal intensity. The book's structure—interweaving chronological events with reflective commentary—allows readers to grasp both the immediacy of the crisis and its broader implications.

One notable aspect is Krakauer's candid self-examination. He does not shy away from critiquing his own decisions and physical limitations during the climb, which adds authenticity and depth to the narrative. This introspection contrasts sharply with the sometimes sensationalized accounts in the media, presenting a nuanced portrait of human fallibility in extreme conditions.

The Role of Commercial Expeditions

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer critically assesses the burgeoning industry of commercial Everest expeditions. The 1990s saw a surge in guided climbs, attracting adventurers with varying degrees of experience. Krakauer highlights how this influx strained resources, created bottlenecks on key routes, and compromised safety protocols.

This commercialization brought about a paradox: while enabling more people to attempt Everest, it also introduced inexperienced climbers who depended heavily on guides, sometimes overwhelming the logistical capabilities of expeditions. Krakauer's account suggests that the profit motive may have influenced decisions to proceed with summit attempts despite deteriorating weather, raising ethical concerns about the prioritization of client satisfaction over climber welfare.

Character Studies and Interpersonal Dynamics

The book provides in-depth profiles of key figures involved in the expedition, including Rob Hall, the leader of the Adventure Consultants team, and Scott Fischer, head of Mountain Madness. Krakauer explores their leadership styles, motivations, and the pressures they faced. The interpersonal tensions and camaraderie among team members underscore the complex social environment on Everest.

These character studies illuminate how individual choices and group dynamics contributed to the tragedy. Krakauer's portrayal avoids simplistic hero-villain dichotomies, instead presenting multifaceted personalities grappling with extraordinary circumstances.

Impact and Reception in the Mountaineering Community

Since its publication, *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer has sparked extensive debate within mountaineering circles. Many praise the book for its honesty and detailed account, while others criticize Krakauer for perceived biases or for airing the community's internal conflicts publicly. The book has influenced safety protocols and sparked discussions about the commercialization and ethics of high-altitude climbing.

From a broader perspective, Krakauer's work has transcended the niche of mountaineering literature, reaching general audiences and contributing to the popular understanding of Everest's allure and dangers. It has been adapted into documentaries and feature films, further cementing its status as a touchstone in adventure literature.

Strengths and Limitations of the Book

- **Strengths:**

- Firsthand, detailed narrative providing an immersive experience.
- Balanced critique of commercial expeditions and individual accountability.
- Clear, engaging prose accessible to both enthusiasts and general readers.
- Insightful reflections on the psychological and physical challenges of climbing.

- **Limitations:**

- Potential subjectivity due to Krakauer's personal involvement.
- Some critics argue it oversimplifies complex factors by focusing heavily on certain individuals.
- Limited exploration of Sherpa perspectives and broader socio-cultural contexts.

Comparisons with Other Everest Literature

When juxtaposed with other Everest narratives such as Anatoli Boukreev's *"The Climb"*, Krakauer's account offers a contrasting viewpoint. Boukreev, a guide on the same expedition, challenges some of Krakauer's conclusions, particularly regarding rescue efforts and decision-making. This divergence underscores the subjective nature of recounting traumatic events and highlights the multifaceted reality of such disasters.

Moreover, recent literature increasingly incorporates perspectives from Sherpas and local communities, providing a more holistic understanding of Everest expeditions. Compared to these works, *Into Thin Air* remains primarily a Western-centric narrative, reflective of its time.

Relevance in Today's Mountaineering Environment

Two decades after the 1996 tragedy, Everest continues to attract climbers worldwide, with challenges evolving alongside advances in technology and increased commercialization. *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer remains relevant as a cautionary tale, emphasizing the critical importance of preparation, ethical leadership, and respect for nature's unpredictability.

Modern expeditions benefit from improved weather forecasting, satellite communication, and stricter regulations; however, issues such as overcrowding and environmental degradation persist. Krakauer's work prompts ongoing reflection on how these factors affect climber safety and the mountain's future.

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer endures as a definitive account of one of Everest's darkest chapters, blending gripping narrative with investigative depth. Its influence extends beyond mountaineering, resonating with anyone intrigued by the limits of human endurance and the complexities of risk in pursuit of extraordinary goals.

[Into Thin Air By Jon Krakauer](#)

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into thin air by jon krakauer: *Into Thin Air* Jon Krakauer, 1997-04-22 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 his long, dangerous descent from 29,028 feet, twenty other climbers were still pushing

doggedly toward the top. No one had noticed that the sky had begun to fill with clouds. Six hours later and 3,000 feet lower, in 70-knot winds and blinding snow, Krakauer collapsed in his tent, freezing, hallucinating from exhaustion and hypoxia, but safe. The following morning, he learned that six of his fellow climbers hadn't made it back to their camp and were desperately struggling for their lives. When the storm finally passed, five of them would be dead, and the sixth so horribly frostbitten that his right hand would have to be amputated. *Into Thin Air* is the definitive account of the deadliest season in the history of Everest by the acclaimed journalist and author of the bestseller *Into the Wild*. On assignment for *Outside Magazine* to report on the growing commercialization of the mountain, Krakauer, an accomplished climber, went to the Himalayas as a client of Rob Hall, the most respected high-altitude guide in the world. A rangy, thirty-five-year-old New Zealander, Hall had summited Everest four times between 1990 and 1995 and had led thirty-nine climbers to the top. Ascending the mountain in close proximity to Hall's team was a guided expedition led by Scott Fischer, a forty-year-old American with legendary strength and drive who had climbed the peak without supplemental oxygen in 1994. But neither Hall nor Fischer survived the rogue storm that struck in May 1996. Krakauer examines what it is 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. *Into the Wild* is available on audio, read by actor Campbell Scott.

into thin air by jon krakauer: *Into Thin Air* Instaread, 2016-03-10 *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer | Summary & Analysis Preview: *Into Thin Air* was published in 1997 by journalist and outdoorsman Jon Krakauer. The book focuses on the events surrounding the 1996 Mount Everest disaster, of which the author was a survivor. In 1996, New Zealander mountaineering expert Robert Hall led a commercial expedition to climb the mountain. Krakauer joined this expedition while on assignment for *Outside* magazine. That same climbing season, American, Norwegian, South African, and Taiwanese expeditions also attempted to climb Mount Everest, the world's highest peak. On May 10, 1996, a rogue storm hit Mount Everest as the members of several climbing expeditions descended from the summit. By the end of May 11, eight people were dead. It was the deadliest single incident in the mountain's history up to that time... PLEASE NOTE: This is summary and analysis of the book and NOT the original book. Inside this Instaread Summary of *Into Thin Air*: Overview of the book Important People Key Takeaways Analysis of Key Takeaways About the Author With Instaread, you can get the key takeaways, summary and analysis of a book in 15 minutes. We read every chapter, identify the key takeaways and analyze them for your convenience.

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into thin air by jon krakauer: *Into Thin Air* Jon Krakauer, 1998 *Into Thin Air* is the definitive, personal account of the deadliest season in the history of Mount Everest -- told by acclaimed

journalist, and bestselling author of *Into the Wild* and *Eiger Dreams*, Jon Krakauer. On assignment for *Outside* magazine, Krakauer, an accomplished climber, went to the Himalayas to report on the growing commercialization of the planet's highest mountain. When he reached the summit in the early afternoon of May 10, 1996, he hadn't slept in over 57 hours and was reeling from oxygen depletion. Twenty other climbers were pushing for the summit, and no one had noticed the clouds filling the sky. Six hours later, and 3,000 feet lower, Krakauer collapsed in his tent. The next morning he learned that six of the climbers hadn't made it back. Even though one climber in four dies attempting to reach the summit, business is booming as guides take the rich and the adventurous up the mountain for a fee of \$65,000. Krakauer examines what it is about Everest that has compelled so many people -- including himself -- to throw caution to the wind and willingly subject themselves to so much danger, hardship, and expense. Written with emotional clarity, Krakauer's account of what happened on the roof of the world is a singular achievement.

into thin air by jon krakauer: Quicklet on Jon Krakauer's Into Thin Air (CliffsNotes-like Book Summary) Vivian Wagner, 2012-02-24 ABOUT THE BOOK When I first read Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*, I was enthralled and amazed. The story he tells about a doomed Mt. Everest expedition in 1996 is both thrilling and terrifying, and it also has a lot to say about the problems with the commercialization of adventure expeditions on the highest mountain in the world. It's a well-researched and extraordinarily well-written first-hand account of the tragic expedition, and Krakauer's excellent storytelling makes for gripping reading. Not only was he a member of this expedition, but he knows how to tell a story - how to introduce characters, build drama, and describe situations. He also has a gift for researching and writing history. When I first read *Into Thin Air*, I was prompted to read everything I could get my hands on about Mt. Everest. You could spend several years reading through this material, since there have been many books published about Mt. Everest, including several about this same disaster. Reading as many as you can will throw you into a fascinating, complex, and sometimes contradictory world of adventurers, scientists, business people, Tibetan and Nepalese guides, socialites, swindlers, politicians, artists, dreamers, and many other characters - as well as the frigid and challenging character of the mountain itself. Whether this is your first or fiftieth foray into the literature of Mt. Everest, you won't be disappointed by *Into Thin Air*, and it will certainly draw you into its subzero spell. MEET THE AUTHOR professional writer Vivian Wagner has wide-ranging interests, from technology and business to music and motorcycles. She writes features regularly for ECT News Network, and her work has also appeared in *American Profile*, *Entrepreneur*, *Bluegrass Unlimited*, and many other publications. She is also the author of *Fiddle: One Woman, Four Strings, and 8,000 Miles of Music* (Citadel 2010). For more about her, visit her website at www.vivianwagner.net. EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK *Into Thin Air* (1997) began as a 1996 article for *Outside Magazine*. Krakauer wanted to develop the story more fully, however, and thus was the book was born. He'd originally been assigned to examine the commercialization of Mt. Everest for the *Outside* article. That ended up being the focus of the story after all, but with a much more tragic outcome than he or his editors could have imagined. For the article and subsequent book, Krakauer joined an expedition led by Rob Hall's Adventure Consultants. During that season, a number of other expeditions were also on the mountain along with Krakauer and Hall, including Scott Fischer's *Mountain Madness*. Both Hall and Fischer were killed in the May 1996 disaster, along with six other climbers. Since its publication, *Into Thin Air* has been at the center of controversy surrounding Krakauer's account of events, particularly in regards to questions about who was responsible for tragic errors made on the mountain. Much of the initial criticism of the book came from the Russian climbing guide Anatoli Boukreev, who disputed Krakauer's depiction of him as neglecting his mountain guide duties. In response to Krakauer's book, Boukreev published his own account of the tragedy, co-authored by G. Weston DeWalt, called *The Climb* (1997). In postscript to a later edition of *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer took up this debate and defended his account of the tragedy against Boukreev's criticism. Buy a copy to keep reading!

into thin air by jon krakauer: Into Thin Air Jon Krakauer, 1999-10-19 #1 NATIONAL

BESTSELLER • The epic account of the storm on the summit of Mt. Everest that claimed five lives and left countless more—including Krakauer's—in guilt-ridden disarray. A harrowing tale of the perils of high-altitude climbing, a story of bad luck and worse judgment and of heartbreaking heroism. —PEOPLE A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down. He was wrong. By writing *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. This updated trade paperback edition of *Into Thin Air* includes an extensive new postscript that sheds fascinating light on the acrimonious debate that flared between Krakauer and Everest guide Anatoli Boukreev in the wake of the tragedy. I have no doubt that Boukreev's intentions were good on summit day, writes Krakauer in the postscript, dated August 1999. What disturbs me, though, was Boukreev's refusal to acknowledge the possibility that he made even a single poor decision. Never did he indicate that perhaps it wasn't the best choice to climb without gas or go down ahead of his clients. As usual, Krakauer supports his points with dogged research and a good dose of humility. But rather than continue the heated discourse that has raged since *Into Thin Air*'s denouncement of guide Boukreev, Krakauer's tone is conciliatory; he points most of his criticism at G. Weston De Walt, who coauthored *The Climb*, Boukreev's version of events. And in a touching conclusion, Krakauer recounts his last conversation with the late Boukreev, in which the two weathered climbers agreed to disagree about certain points. Krakauer had great hopes to patch things up with Boukreev, but the Russian later died in an avalanche on another Himalayan peak, Annapurna I. In 1999, Krakauer received an Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters—a prestigious prize intended to honor writers of exceptional accomplishment. According to the Academy's citation, 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.

into thin air by jon krakauer: [Into Thin Air](#) Jon Krakauer, 1997

into thin air by jon krakauer: [Jon Krakauer's Into Thin Air](#) Ant Hive Media, 2016-04-14 This is a Summary of Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster* By writing *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. 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. In 1999, Krakauer received an Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters--a prestigious prize intended to honor writers of exceptional accomplishment. According to the Academy's citation, 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. Available in a variety of formats, this summary is aimed for those who want to capture the gist of the book but don't have the current time to devour all 368 pages. You get the main summary along with all of the benefits and lessons the actual book has to offer. This summary is intended to be used with reference to the original book.

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