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Kingdoms Of Experience: Everest, The Unclimbed Ridge



Synopsis

In March 1985, Mal Duff led a new expedition to conquer Everest by the unclimbed north-east ridge. The last attempt by a Chris Bonington team had ended in failure and tragedy - with the deaths of two great climbers, Joe Tasker and Pete Boardman. Everyone knew the risks as well as the excitement of the challenge. In this extraordinary book, Greig chronicles not only the assault on the peak but also the complex inter-relationships of nineteen very different personalities living together.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very accessible account of a second British attempt to summit Everest via the North East ridge organized by Malcolm Duff in 1985. A previous attempt in 1982 led by Chris Bonington (see Everest: The Unclimbed Ridge by Chris Bonington for more information about that attempt) had resulted in the tragic loss of two climbers, Joe Tasker and Peter Boardman. Since the author of the book, Andrew Greig, had only recently begun climbing, we are initiated into the inner world of the British mountaineering society at almost the same time that he is being initiated. This account focuses on the inter-relations among the diverse personalities of the climbers recruited for this attempt. In addition, to the authors first hand accounts and summaries of the various stages

involved in organizing an expedition of this magnitude, we are given numerous journal entries from the other participants. I feel that this is an important dimension that is not always found in other books of this type. Typically, books on mountaineering are written by a single author even though numerous individuals have been involved in the climb. In this book, we are not limited to the author's opinion of how some of the other members were affected. Rather we can understand how they responded to the demands being placed on them in their own words. Another interesting aspect deals with how this diverse group of people come together to work as a team and how they are haunted by the memory of Joe Tasker and Peter Boardman. While no one in this group summited, personal bests for highest point attained were set by most of the participants. For those that climbed into the Death Zone (see *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer and *The Death Zone* by Matt Dickinson), there was the realization that they were able to function at that level without supplemental oxygen. The book is very enjoyable and accessible. The commercialization of Everest has become a much debated topic since the tragic events of 1996 (again, see *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer). This book shows us what Everest was like prior to the hand-held guided tours that seem to be so favorable today.

I enjoyed this second book about Himalayan mountaineering as much as the first and for the same reasons. Mr. Greig is skilled in letting the reader into the cloistered life of a climbing expedition deep in the heart of the world's great wilderness. We share in these people's private thoughts and their triumphs and failures. I would say it's almost as good as being there in person but of course an experience like that is incomparable.

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