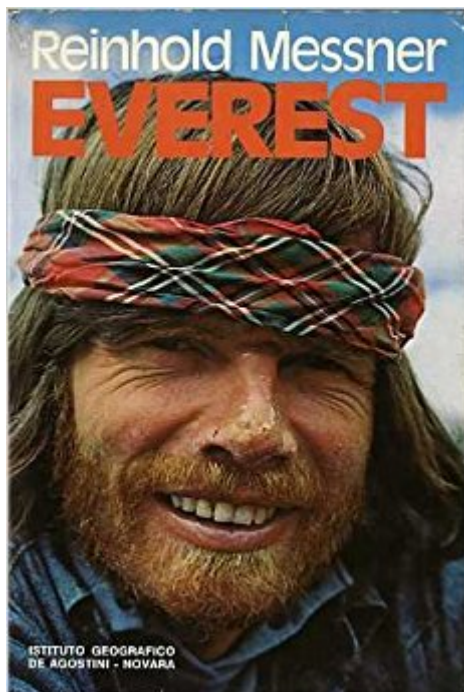


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Everest: Expedition To The Ultimate



Synopsis

* Messner is the most highly acclaimed climber in mountaineering history* Includes updates on recent events plus a history of Everest ascents* Features full-color photographs Reinhold Messner, with his partner Peter Habeler, was the first to summit Everest without the aid of supplemental oxygen. In this riveting retelling of that climb, Messner says, "Everest by fair means -- that is the human dimension, and that is what interests me . . . In reaching for an oxygen cylinder, a climber degrades Everest. . . . A climber who doesn't rely on his own strength and skills, but on apparatus and drugs, deceives himself."In this mountaineering classic, Messner recounts the thoughts of a mountaineer during the climb of his life. Messner's compelling chronicle conveys the exhaustion, despair, and exhilaration of mountaineering in the death zone, interwoven with spectacular color photographs. This edition includes Messner's reflections on the latest Everest disasters. A must-have for any reader of adventure narratives. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, German (translation)

REINHOLD MESSNER is often called the greatest living mountaineer. He was the first man to summit Everest without supplementary oxygen, the first to solo Everest, and the first to climb all fourteen of the world's 8,000-meter peaks. He is the author of numerous books, including The Crystal Horizon and Antarctica. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this

title.

It was a great achievement to have been the first (along with team mate Peter Habeler) to have climbed Everest without supplementary oxygen. This is a candid account of the climb, along with the human story - Messner's inner tussles with himself, his emotions during and after, his long-standing dream of Everest without oxygen, and finally how it's almost an anti-climax when the dream is achieved... dream over, what next? Messner states in the introduction, "If a man cannot reveal anything [of his feelings], he has nothing to say." Messner has tape recorded his thoughts and feelings of the moment during the days on the mountain, and has written this book as authentically true to the feelings at that time - rather than any mis-remembered or glorified version from a comfortable chair at home. However the writing style is somewhat disjointed - jumping from one interesting incident to another rather than a cohesive (but likely more boring) complete narrative. I guess this book is a translation from the German. I certainly did not read it for its literary merits, it was more for the incredible story itself. At the beginning of the book, there is a several pages long quote from Norton's account of the 1924 expedition which ended tragically with Mallory and Irvine being lost in the upper reaches of Everest. This early expedition has the roots of the debate concerning supplementary oxygen - whether it was physically possible to climb to the top of the world without it and the ethical issues of "would it be by fair means?". This sets the context nicely for the rest of the book. It is a story of immense physical and mental endurance, all kinds of mortal dangers including ice-falls, avalanches, storms... the number of times the Sherpas and climbers have to go back and forth between base camp and higher camps under threatening, unstable ice walls that can fall and crush everyone without notice - to setup ladders across crevasses, cut ice steps, carry supplies to higher camps. All of which is a necessary part of achieving the summit. I particularly loved the descriptions of the storm at high altitude which Messner and two Sherpas got caught in, with their primary tent ripping in one night, then the struggle to put up a secondary. And how this incident impacted his confidence about going on, and how he overcame those mental battles. Messner gives due credit to the Sherpas without whom any expedition cannot succeed, giving their names and photos in the book. But it still comes across as an uncomfortable relationship between the "Sahibs" and the Sherpas. The inequity is disturbing - I'm sure it exists in the real life of all Himalayan expeditions and hence it comes out in the narrative. What makes this book special is the minor details that Messner chooses to record - such as some mundane conversation in a tent cooped up with a climbing partner, or how he taught the Sherpas some pasta recipes - these things give you a window into expedition life. You also get some insight into expedition politics, interactions

among team members. One thing that strikes me is, the incredible self-centered attitude of each person on such expeditions - each one goes with ambitions and hopes of achieving glory, personal fulfillment, whatever - and knows that they cannot "go it" alone - and hence the teams. But teams are only good as long as they don't hold one back from their ambitions... if that is threatened, "each man to himself" is the motto that comes across. The excellent color and black&white photos interspersed with the narrative add a lot to the story too. True to what he said in the introduction, you do get an idea of the man behind the climber. It is a great mountaineering book, but be warned that there's a lot of emotional angst in it!

Of course it's Reinhold Messner a legendary climber, but not so as a writer. He also audiotaped his thoughts and whole conversations and these are word for word part of the book. Not so interesting and a bit pretentious. Joe Tasker's accounts were the best so far.

Good read. I am a huge fan of Messner but I didn't find the book gripping in a way that some other books I have read on the topic. It is worth a read but I found it somewhat disjointed. also found it too short for the story it was trying to tell ie lacking soem detail which I felt could have brough value to the overall story.

Classic book. Its written in a style that isn't too straightforward, but it does capture the actual events that lead Messner to reach the summit without supplemental oxygen. It also contains great historical references to other expeditions. Good read on a cold and snowy weekend.

Along with his personal story of summitting Everest, Mr Messner has included many photos, charts and maps. A very detailed history of Everest attempts.

Dull and non-dramatic, half of the sentences are about the effect of oxygen.

Good. Not great.

Much different review on climbing at altitude.

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