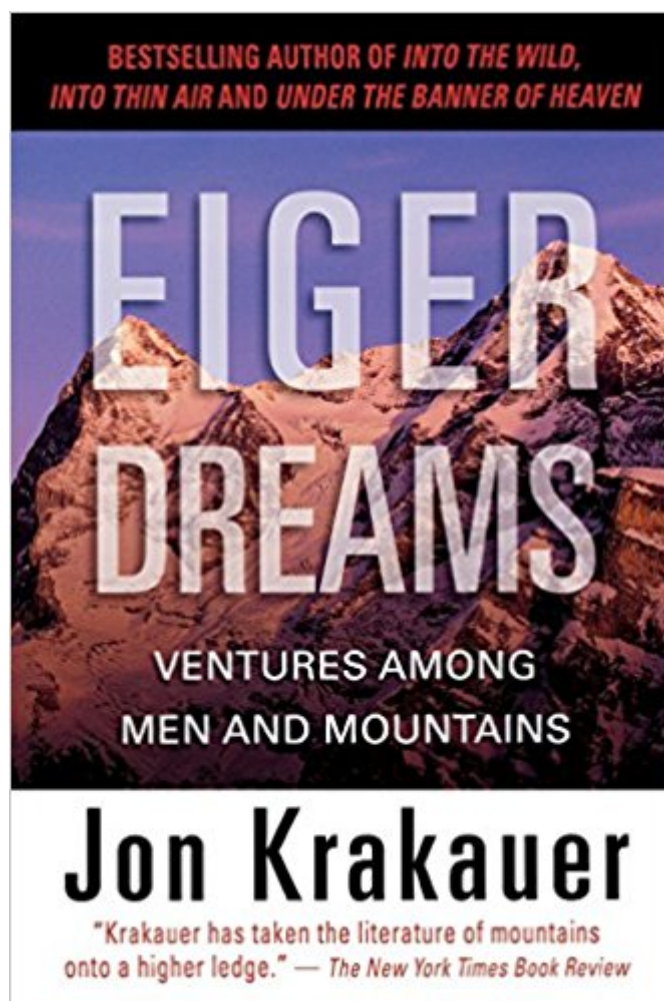


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# Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men And Mountains



## Synopsis

No one writes about mountaineering and its attendant hardships and victories more brilliantly than critically acclaimed author Jon Krakauer. In this collection of his finest work from such magazines as *Outside* and *Smithsonian*, he explores the subject from the unique and memorable perspective of one who has battled peaks like K2, Denali, Everest, and, of course, the Eiger. Always with a keen eye, an open heart, and a hunger for the ultimate experience, he gives us unerring portraits of the mountaineering experience. Yet *Eiger Dreams* is more about people than about rock and ice—people with that odd, sometimes maniacal obsession with mountain summits that sets them apart from other men and women. Here we meet Adrian the Romanian, determined to be the first of his countrymen to solo Denali; John Gill, climber not of great mountains but of house-sized boulders so difficult to surmount that even demanding alpine climbs seem easy; and many more compelling and colorful characters. In the most intimate piece, “The Devils Thumb,” Krakauer recounts his own near-fatal, ultimately triumphant struggle with solo-madness as he scales Alaska’s Devils Thumb. *Eiger Dreams* is stirring, vivid writing about one of the most compelling and dangerous of all human pursuits.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

No matter what the actual temperature may be, several pages into *Eiger Dreams* you will begin to shiver. Halfway through you will acquire a new appreciation for your fingers, toes, and the fact that you still have a nose. And by the end of this collection, you’ll define some commonly used phrases in an entirely different way. The understated “catch some air” and the whimsical “log some flight

time" are climbers' euphemisms for falling, while "crater" refers to what happens when you log some flight time all the way to the ground. "Summiting," the term for reaching the top of a mountain, seems almost colorless in comparison. The various heroes, risk-takers, incompetents, and individualists Krakauer captures are more than colorful, whether they summit or not. The author is more interested in exploring the addiction of risk--the intensity of effort--than mere triumph. There's the mythical minimalist climber, John Gill, whose fame "rests entirely on assents less than thirty feet high," and the Burgess brothers--freewheeling, free-floating English twins who seem to make all the right decisions when it counts, and hence most often fail to reach the top. Of course, they are alive. Over these and other talented climbers hangs a malignant, endlessly creative nature--its foehn winds can make people crazy and its avalanches do far worse. *Eiger Dreams* is an adrenaline fest for the weary, an overdue examination of a stylish, brave subculture. As one of the heroes Krakauer outlines says of his occupation, "It's sort of like having fun, only different." --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Armchair adventurers can't ask for better entertainment than this tour of the legendary locations of mountaineering and the eccentric climbers who gather there. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

How to do justice to a writer like Krakauer....well, he's such a good writer that I feel any review I write would suffer compared to the source. Nevertheless, here I go. This is Krakauer's first book. It's a collection of his previously published articles on mountaineering (save the last one about Devil's Thumb which was written for the book.) What a great read too whether you are an aficionado of the sport or, like me, you've never seen a pair of crampons in your life (by the way, those are a set of spikes climbers strap to their boots to support themselves and prevent slipping on icy slopes.) Some of the famous peaks that make an appearance here include K2, Mt McKinley, and the titular Eiger. Throughout you will read about some of the eccentric personalities in the international climbing community, personal triumph and inspiration, offshoots like bouldering and waterfall climbing, and horrific tragedy. If you read *Into Thin Air*, you'll be surprised at how funny this book is. Krakauer displays a wry, self-deprecating wit in several of these stories--something the somber subject matter of the latter book didn't permit. The last one, about his decision to solo the Devil's Thumb in Alaska in his early twenties is hysterical. Anyone who can make a story about being tentbound or the inventor of the perfect ice axe riveting deserves attention. If you are on the fence, just go ahead and get this book. It's definitely worth it.

I was enthralled by *Into Thin Air* and enjoy Jon Krakauer's writing style. The reviews on *Eiger Dreams* were very good and I love being an armchair mountain climber, so I thought I would give *Eiger Dreams* a try. Unfortunately I found this collection of stories just so-so. Many of the stories include name-dropping of various famous climbers, which meant nothing to me since I am not a member of the climbing community. Same with some of the famous climbs and routes-as an outsider I just couldn't appreciate them. This book would probably be much more enjoyable to a knowledgeable climbing enthusiast.

I have read almost everything Krakauer has written and although mountaineering/ adventuring isn't something I plan on engaging in in real life, it is always fun to read about. This book is a series of short essays and most of them have been previously published in various outdoorsy magazines. I was expecting more about mountains and climbing (a la *Into Thin Air*) and was surprised that the articles in here run the gamut through various outdoor adventures. There are stories about boulder climbing, airplane flying, cities that make their living from adventurers, and of course a personal essay as well. Not what I was expecting, and not something I would find myself rereading ever, but certainly an interesting peak into this world that is so foreign to me. Overall most of the essays were not a subject that I would have thought to read about and I may not have bought if I had read the description more thoroughly. Probably not too interesting for people who live the life, but fun for non-adventurers to dream.

From Eiger's nordwand to Devil's thumb the book spans a climbing universe and gives a nice survey. I liked it. Krakauer's writing style is so easy to read. My only fault is that I know he also wrote a book about Everest that was embellished to sell so I can't give any more of his books 5 stars.

Not as elegant as *Into Thin Air* and the Chris McCandless story, and a number of typo's here and there, but still enjoyable for covering a good many categories and characters related to the climbing sport.

This book is a collection of short articles in which Krakauer recounts his own climbing adventures and the adventures of other climbers. The subject is very exciting. In one story Krakauer tells the story of climbers marching head-on into delirium and exhaustion to reach the summit of K2. In

another we learn of a legend who can scale vertical walls with handholds no larger than the heads of bolts. Additionally, Krakauer himself is an interesting character. I was both inspired with awe and impressed with his humility by his recollection of a solo climb he did on the Devil's Thumb. "On Being Tentbound" will resonate with anyone who has spent time on a mountain. Unfortunately, Krakauer's prose often falls flat. The chapter "A Bad Summer on K2" feels like a series of accident reports. "Canyoneering" often reads like a geology textbook. In *Eiger Dreams*, Krakauer does not display much talent in writing action scenes. Some authors can weave sentence structure and word choice together with action to make for a very exciting read. Krakauer is not one of them. Whether he is detailing the shape of a climbing axe, or describing someone sliding to their death, his voice stays the same. Ultimately, *Eiger Dreams* is saved by the fact that the subject is exciting and that Krakauer has first hand knowledge of it. This is an enjoyable book that will resonate strongly with anyone who has spent time in a survival situation.

What compels someone to undertake an endeavor in which death is a likely outcome? What perverse thrill impels someone to climb a sheer vertical wall of rock? To face sudden storms, blistering walls of wind and ice, conditions where you are not sure if you are awake or dreaming, where a sudden misstep might plunge you down a bottomless crevasse never to be heard from again? Jon Krakauer takes you on such an amazing journey onto some of the most inhospitable and yet sublimely beautiful places on Earth. His intensely crackling descriptions of not just the otherworldly locations, but the mind sets of those who set out to brave these places makes for a spectacularly riveting read. Highly recommended.

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