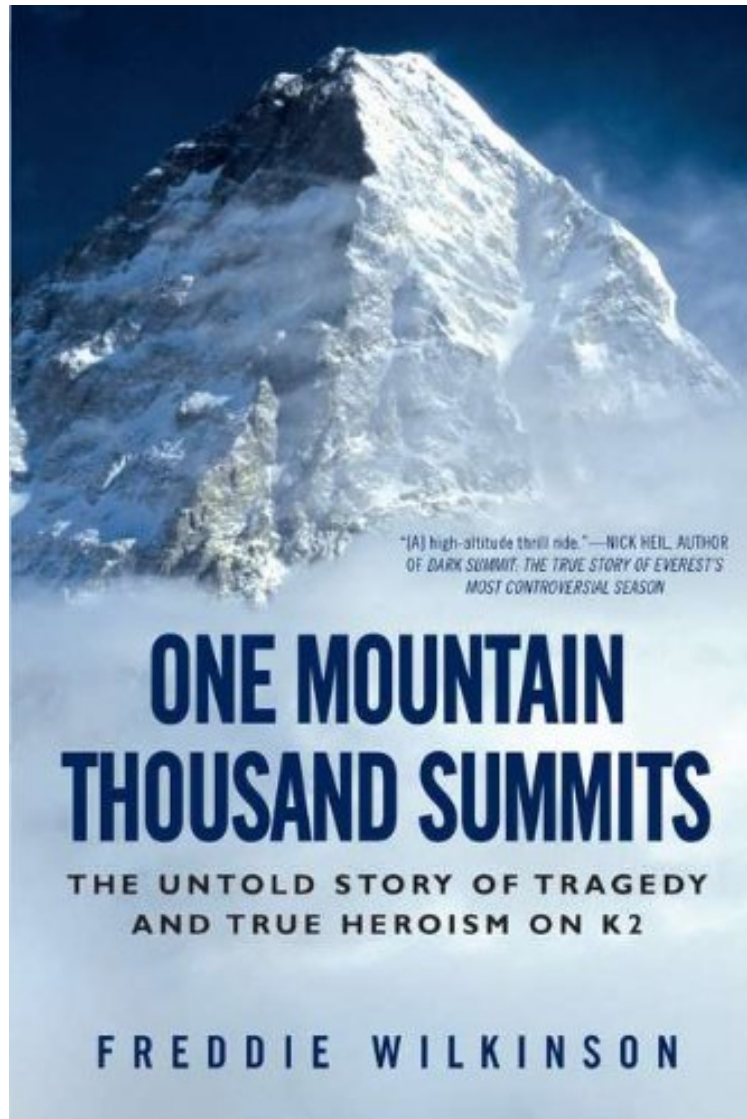


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## One Mountain Thousand Summits: The Untold Story of Tragedy and True Heroism on K2

*Freddie Wilkinson*

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#1404449 in Books Penguin 2011-07-05 2011-07-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.90 x .82 x 5.971, .88 #File Name: 045123331X368 pages Freddie Wilkinson Climbing Mountaineering Narrative One Mountain Thousand Summits | File size: 60.Mb

**Freddie Wilkinson : One Mountain Thousand Summits: The Untold Story of Tragedy and True Heroism on K2** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Mountain Thousand Summits: The Untold Story of Tragedy and True Heroism on K2:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. worth reading for the extra detail, in spite of author possible bias and murky conclusions

**By pjfK2**, 2nd highest mountain, with a 1/4 death rate (at one point) , had a particularly bad year in 2008, which has spawned at least four books and 2 documentaries. After months of bad weather, a brief spell of warm sunny weather sent the becamped teams lunging for K2's summit, but the teams had a late start out of camp 4. The excessive heat during the day caused massive calving of seracs when the temperature plunged that evening. The fixed ropes from the traverse down the bottleneck were severed by avalanches that swept away some descending climbers and stranded others in the dark at the top of the traverse above the bottleneck. Exhausted from their summit push, some waited for daylight before venturing down, while others chose to navigate through the changed landscape in the dark sans fixed ropes. While some made it to camp four, others waited for light. Some struggled to find the route down, becoming lost. Others were trapped in a tangle of fixed lines. Meanwhile seracs continued to calve, creating more avalanches against the struggling climbers. Many of the climbers, from multiple expeditions, were separated at various times, all were suffering from exhaustion and oxygen deprivation, so their stories naturally differ. And after the disaster, as many have noted, news organizations harried the climbers for details, but not the Sherpas and HAPs who also had a story to tell. This book purports to give the Sherpa/HAP view. While a worthy goal, it was tainted somewhat by the author's admitted bias. When I read a first person account of a climb, I expect bias as a matter of course. A 3rd party nonmember account should aim for objectivity. Here the author admitted he had a predisposed bias where he was expecting Westerners to be taking advantage of Sherpas/HAPS. Yet sometimes finding the reverse. Many reviewers have commented that while this book begins well, it becomes more disjointed as it goes along. Perhaps in part because the author's preconceived premise wasn't fully supported, and some of what he'd hoped to find proved elusive. You get the sense he's throwing every interview against the wall, hoping something sticks. While the author interviews many of the climbing Sherpas and HAPS, as well as expedition members, he doesn't get all the answers he seeks. In the end, he fails to put forth his own clear reconstruction of what happened, based upon his analysis of these many interviews. There's no conclusion/summary chapter. He simply reports on them. While interesting to meet more fully the principal Sherpas/HAPS on the expedition (those who talked), they often seem to dance around what really happened that night. And that's expected - many of these individuals still work in this profession. They don't like to say anything that might impact their booking the next job. I would have valued the book more if the author had come in wanting to tell the staff story, but striving a little harder to set his stated expectations as to what he would find, his bias, aside. As it is, hearing of that from his own words, unfortunately taints the work somewhat. As a readers, I want the facts as reported, the opinions of the players, climber and staff, without the author's bias getting so much in the way. He actually states in the book his disappointment for not find his expectations fully supported by his investigations. For me, that was a "whew!" moment. That doesn't mean this book isn't worth reading, Just that it had some obvious issues. Also, like several climbing books I've read, the prologue/first chapter read well, the rest could have used an editor. I have a sneaking suspicion this is because many books are sold to publishers based upon the first chapter or so being done and the rest just outlined. That first part is a polished winner. The rest, given professional editing even at the big six isn't what it used to be, not so much. But if you are fascinated by K2., or just want a fuller picture of this unfortunate climbing year on the "savage" mountain, certainly get this book.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. From A Sherpa's Perspective

**By Cynthia M. Andersen** I loved this book because it made me feel something! I felt I was one of those Sherpas, in Freddie's description in the very first part of the book, trying to get down the worst part of K2 after an avalanche disaster occurred. The book jumped in several places but I feel it had to because it had to provide the all encompassing variations and stories of the disasters going on on K-2 because 11 people died and not all together! But what I loved most about this book is the perspective of the Sherpas, for in my other readings they are never considered. They are there! They are intuitive and they know what is going on on that mountain. They are not just there to carry the loads and set ropes people. We should be bowing down to them in reverence for letting us be in their country and we go against every grain that is different from their Buddhists Beliefs of community, service to community, and risking life and limb for others....a lesson we all sorely need in some cases on those mountains e.g. Francys Asentiev, David Sharp, and for anyone else that has died in vain of getting help. Gerard McDonnell was such a man!!! He gave up his life to save others! We so adhered to our standards of not believing that he could have helped those Koreans that he was literally thought to be "out of it" when in fact his conscience dictated otherwise - proof from pictures, interviews with the sherpas, and estabiishing timelines. Freddie, I loved your book and can't wait to read about other adventures. I also love those Sherpa people with all my heart - they remind me of the folks I lived with in Liberia, West Africa for almost 3 years....

Cynthia M Andersen Golden, CO

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Mountains and Media

**By Joel@AWS** Let me start with this: the prologue in "One Mountain Thousand Summits" is astounding. There is no other word for it. If you're not on a bit of an adrenalin rush by the end of it, you probably have trouble fogging a mirror too. The prologue alone is worth the price of the book. And the rest ain't bad either. However, it's not what the prologue, and other climbing books, might lead you to expect. It's not a blow-by-blow account of the various expeditions on K2 in 2008, leading up to a big finish on the summit day and its immediate aftermath. The majority of the hard-hitting mountaineering action is in that prologue. Instead, Freddie Wilkinson backs off and looks at the role -- for better and for worse -- that modern, Internet-

driven media played in revealing one version of the story to the world. That version, as it turned out, was founded mostly on rumor, second-hand reports, and the recollections of the "first world" survivors, who weren't in the best shape to accurately perceive all that was happening. Once he's deconstructed that story, Wilkinson then digs in and talks to some of the other climbers who were on the summit that day: the Sherpas. There is no frivolous agenda here: the surviving Sherpas made hard decisions, some of which the reader may or may not disagree with, acted with great physical courage and strength, but, as Freddie reveals, so did some of their clients, particularly Gerard McDonnell, an Irish mountaineer. Still, there's no avoiding the fact that in August 2008, no one in the western media world was asking the Sherpas what happened at 28,000 feet. Maybe next time they will. The book would have benefited a bit if the author had laid out his thesis near the beginning, to give the reader some idea of the direction he'd be going. But I'd not want the author to have taken anything away from the book's roaring start. "Four voices spoke in the night." Many months later, some of those voices spoke again and brought light to a story only half told.

The account of one of the deadliest and most mysterious tragedies in mountaineering history—the 2008 K2 disaster. One Mountain Thousand Summits reveals the true story of the K2 tragedy that claimed the lives of eleven men. Based on his numerous trips to Nepal and in-depth interviews he conducted with the survivors, the families of the lost climbers, and the Sherpa guides whose heroic efforts saved the lives of at least four climbers, Freddie Wilkinson's narrative uncovers what actually occurred on the mountain, while delivering a criticism of the mainstream press's incomplete coverage of the event, and an insightful look into the lives of the six Sherpas who were involved.

From Publishers Weekly Wilkinson, a veteran alpinist and mountaineering scribe, closely examines the mysterious tragedy that cost the lives of 11 men on the unforgiving K2, the world's second highest mountain, on August 2008, in his new book. Interviewing not only the survivors and the families of the victims but the heroic Sherpa guides in Nepal, he gives the daunting legacy of the challenging terrain and a blow-by-blow account, with clinical accuracy and detail, of the disaster that nearly wiped out the international climbing team. Wilkinson also describes what makes an experienced climber challenge himself to risk death using his technical skills, endurance, and mental stamina while battling bone-chilling cold, altitude sickness, and avalanches. In this powerful rendering of a well-publicized grim event, there is so much said about the courage and heroism of the climbers braving these geological wonders and the media's silence over the neglected native saviors. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "[A] high altitude thrill ride." -Nick Heil, Author of Dark Summit: The True Story of Everest's Most Controversial Season "From the very start, I found One Mountain Thousand Summits riveting." -Conrad Anker, Co-author of The Last Explorer: Finding Mallory on Mt. Everest "The gritty oeuvre is not only intensely captivating, but also the most comprehensive and introspective account of the disastrous events that took place on K2 [in 2008]." -Alpinist One Mountain Thousand Summits delves deeply and without hyperbole into what is really happening to high-altitude mountaineering." -Ed Douglas, Author of Tenzig: Hero of Everest "The book is moving and it succeeds thematically. One Mountain Thousand Summits finally offers hope that human dignity can prevail in the rarefied air above eight thousand meters." -Rock and Ice "Wilkinson focuses on the generally unsung guides and porters employed by the ill-fated 2008 expeditions, including a potted history of the Sherpas." -Financial Times "Freddie Wilkinson is one of his generation's best and most articulate mountaineers. K2 can be a savage mountain. Imagine yourself above 28,000 feet, in a storm, in the dark, and an avalanche has swept away your fixed ropes. Survival is on the line. Is it every man for himself or do you risk it all to help another? There is not one better to search for answers and relive the greatest drama on the world's most dramatic mountain than Freddie. This is a must read for climbers or for anyone who wants to know what it feels like to push yourself to the very edge and the lessons we can learn about ourselves and humanity from extreme adventure." -Geoff Tabin, Author of Blind Corners: Adventures on Seven Continents "In his One Mountain Thousand Summits, Freddie Wilkinson tells us what really happened high on K2 in August 2008 when eleven climbers lost their lives... Especially compelling is the credence Wilkinson gives to the surviving Sherpas' version of events and the way he weaves the affected families and loved ones into this amazing story of survivors and heroes. This is a must read because it illuminates the most complex and tragic two days in the mountain's history." -Jim Wickwire, Coauthor of Addicted to Danger and the first American (with Lou Reichardt) to summit K2 "One Mountain Thousand Summits is both a high-altitude thrill ride and an eloquent meditation on our infatuation with - and frequent misunderstanding of - individuals driven to climb to the highest places on earth. Thanks to Wilkinson's tenacious investigation, narrated with uncommon skill and grace, he has produced the definitive account of the much debated 2008 disaster on K2." -Nick Heil, Author of Dark Summit: The True Story of Everest's Most Controversial Season "In a single two-day period, eleven climbers lost their lives on K2. In a mystery clouded by the haze of exhaustion, thin air, and poor communication we are left to wonder: What happened on August 1-2, 2008? With an insider's knowledge of Himalayan climbing, Wilkinson goes deep into the lives of the climbers and particularly the Sherpas on this fateful climb to produce a book that should be essential reading for those wanting to understand the disaster. From the very start, I found One Mountain Thousand Summits riveting." "Wilkinson is a talented alpinist himself, as well as an enquiring writer, and he takes nothing for granted... shrewdly structure to take full account of the

Nepali climbers' and Sherpas' stories." --- --Conrad Anker, Coauthor of *The Last Explorer: Finding Mallory on Mt. Everest*

About the Author Freddie Wilkinson is a professional alpine climber, mountain guide, and author. He is the recipient of several honors, including the American Alpine Club's Robert Hicks Bates and Lyman Spitzer Awards, the Mugs Stump Award, the McNeill-Nott Award, the prestigious Piolet d'Or, and a grant from the National Geographic Expeditions Council. In addition to having his writing published nationwide in the *New York Times*, the *Huffington Post*, *National Geographic*, *Men's Journal*, and more, Wilkinson is the author of *One Mountain Thousand Summits* and the writer and codirector of the documentaries *The Old Breed* and *The Sanctity of Space*.