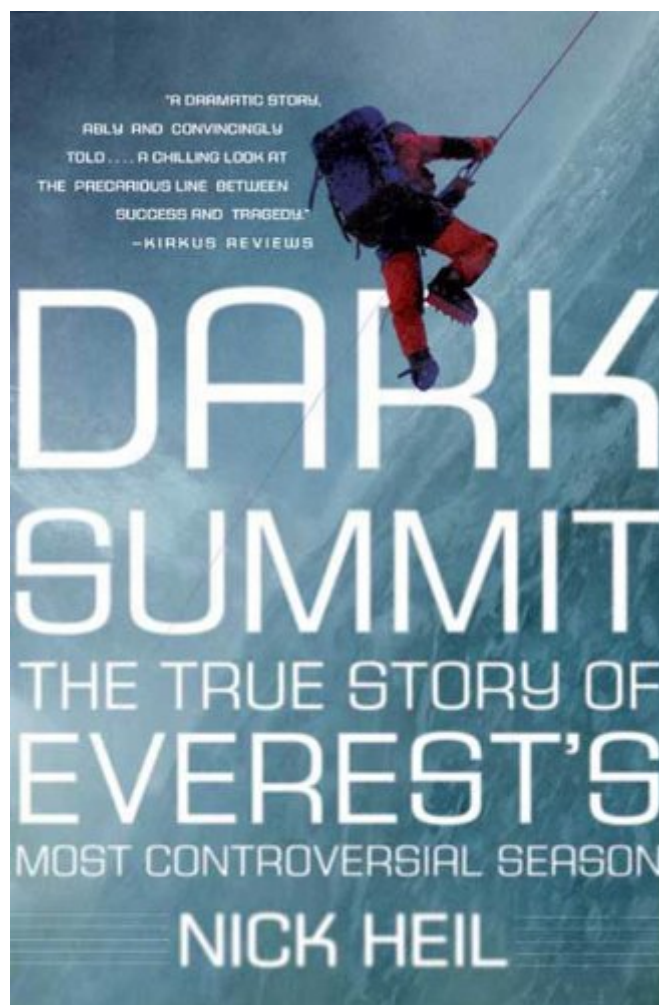


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Dark Summit: The True Story Of Everest's Most Controversial Season



Synopsis

The inside story of the deadly 2006 climbing season on Everest On May 15, 2006, a young British climber named David Sharp lay dying near the top of Mount Everest while forty other climbers walked past him on their way to the summit. A week later, Lincoln Hall, a seasoned Australian climber, was left for dead near the same spot. Hall's death was reported around the world, but the next day he was found alive after spending the night on the upper mountain with no food and no shelter. If David Sharp's death was shocking, it was hardly singular: despite unusually good weather, ten others died attempting to reach the summit that year. In this meticulous inquiry into what went wrong, Nick Heil tells the full story of the deadliest year on Everest since the infamous season of 1996. He introduces Russell Brice, the commercial operator who has done more than anyone to provide access to the summit via the mountain's north side—and who some believe was partly accountable for Sharp's death. As more climbers attempt the summit each year, Heil shows how increasingly risky expeditions and unscrupulous outfitters threaten to turn Everest into a deadly circus. Written by an experienced climber and outdoor writer, *Dark Summit* is both a riveting account of a notorious climbing season and a troubling investigation into whether the pursuit of the ultimate mountaineering prize has spiraled out of control.

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Customer Reviews

Nick Heil Leaving a man to die in the Dead Zone of Everest Above 8,000 meters on the high mountains of the world is a place where humans were never built to survive for long. On Mount Everest there have been many cases of people who had to be left for dead because they could not assist in their own rescue. In 1996 when Rob Hall remained behind and refused to abandon a client, both ended up dying. That is the reality of the risk. Of course there have been those who were left for dead and ended up surviving against all odds. There was Beck Weathers during the infamous 1996 season. In this book is the story of Lincoln Hall. Left for dead, he was discovered alive the next day and successfully rescued. Then there is this controversial case. David Sharp, a young British climber was found alive near the summit of Everest. Beside him was the body of a man called "Green Shoes" by climbers. The man had died long ago; his body unrecoverable. It is now used as a marker, to let people know where they are on the mountain. When David Sharp was found, forty people simply climbed past him, paying scant attention. They left him oxygen and gave some minor assistance, but they all elected to continue the climb. Could Sharp have been saved if some of them had abandoned their climb and helped him down to the next safe camp? Would it have made a difference if he had been a member of one of the expeditions, instead of choosing to basically climb without support? The question will never be answered. It is certain that above 8,000 meters, a climber knows that he or she needs to know when to turn around. As one climber has said, "Getting to the top is optional, getting down is necessary." Do people become desensitized to the plight of their fellow humans on such climbs? Or is it simply that the knowledge that each person knows the risks and must be willing to accept that they are in the end responsible for themselves? Is it really too dangerous to even attempt rescue? This book explores the questions, without accusations and unbiased. It details the hardships of climbing Everest, how the mind and is a story of how to survive, and how choices must be made. I give the book five stars

I found this book well researched, informative & objective. I was seeking information when I read this book not, seeking entertainment. Like others, I found it hard to put down. Unlike others, I find no reason to compare it with Krakauer's book nor, to declare Krakauer's book better; that's like saying, "If you've read one Everest book, you've read them all." Krakauer wrote about the 1996 season.

Heil's book is about the 2006 season. Soon there will be a 2016 story... I agree Heil's narrative is complex to follow at times, when earlier expedition references are included but, the history of climbing Everest & the intertwined histories of many of the principals is a complex subject. I appreciated the reportorial style. I've read *Into Thin Air*, *Touching the Void* & *Alive* (the Andes plane crash story.) I've seen the Everest Discovery series. I'm also reading *Everest, the First Ascent* by Harriett Tuckey. I've read several books by NPS rangers which describe the poor choices people make in challenging environments, horrific accidents & highly technical rescues. Thanks to Nick Heil's detailed source notes, I now have an extensive Everest bibliography to explore. I'm not a climber & never will be. I would be very interested in climbers' views of the book. My personal mountain experience is limited to living in the Rockies at 10,000 ft, riding horseback/skiing from a bit higher & more recently, hiking in the Appalachians--yes, we know they're foothills. I remember an acclimatization period when first taking up residence at 10,000 ft., despite being young & healthy. (Running up stairs does make you dizzy without those extra RBC's.) I can only begin to imagine acclimatizing at 8000+ meters, much less the extreme physical & mental challenges of climbing at this height, while enduring brutal temperature & weather conditions. As an armchair observer of these efforts, I am at a loss to understand people who place themselves at the foot of Everest without appropriate knowledge, ability, preparation, equipment or support structure for a summit attempt. I am at more of a loss to understand "organized" expeditions which seem to offer little more than the necessary permits & appear to accept little responsibility when things go wrong. I do NOT include Russell Brice's Himex in this group. I have to agree Brice makes an easy target. I'm also at a loss to understand how the opinions of a couple who promised the first manned spaceflight to Mars in 2008 have any credibility in the climbing world whatsoever. Am I missing something from here in my chair? It seems to me that their website is the commercial exploitation engine. They appear to be neither rocket scientists nor, journalists.

I'm sure this is a great read. The story of the 2006 season on Everest was chronicled on Discovery's documentary "Everest: Beyond the Limit" and it even touched on the death of David Sharp. In this book, Mr. Sharp's death is explored in depth and is pretty disturbing at times. However, I felt that this book lacked exigency in its story telling, which left the prose a little dry. And this may even be an unfair assessment as I read this immediately after reading Jon Krakauer's heart-wrenching "Into Thin Air." But, compared to Krakauer's book, this one just didn't grab me and clinch me by the throat. Still, it's a decent read and goes into the behind-the-scenes of the Discovery Channel documentary. Keep in mind though that Nick Heil was not on Everest and is reporting only on the

notes, interviews and commentary by the people who were.

Good book, slow in spots where bogged down by too much detail, with a good social psychology aspect particularly in summary. Having friends who have summited the mountain and made it back home; the book gave further insight to their climb. Those of us who chose to climb, do so with the understanding that only we are responsible for ourselves and the choice we made.

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