



In the Shadow of Denali: Life and Death on Alaska's Mt. McKinley

By Jonathan Waterman

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A lyrical study and celebration of North America's highest peak brings to life the stories of the men and women whose destinies have become intertwined with that of the dangerous mountain during struggles to reach its summit.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

A climbing bum in the late 1970s, Waterman matured into journalism and writing books for the American Alpine Club. Here, he writes of his climbing goal, Mount McKinley (which Native Americans called Denali). While he profiles Bradford Washburn, the Old Man of Denali, and examines sympathetically two feuding climbers whose 1967 expedition ended in tragedy, the greater part of his book deals with people, events, and conditions on and around Denali in the last decade. Each chapter centers on a particular topic that Waterman interweaves with personal reminiscence; they make a whole in which the mountain is more interesting than the climbing. Libraries should buy for Alaskan or climbing collections.

- *Paula M. Strain, MLS, Rockville, Md.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Tales from the mean side of Denali, from a young freelancer with a fast-growing reputation for writing fine climbing stories. Waterman spent ten years becoming intimate with Denali, the High One, once known as Mount McKinley, the highest point in North America. In these ten pieces (most previously published), he tells of his years guiding and working with the emergency rescue team, getting to know the strange characters who frequent the mountain's flanks, experiencing its many moods, running into grizzlies. In the tradition of good adventure tales, the stories bring the hair up on your neck but are written in such an understated fashion they take on the feel of dreamscapes--or of nightmare. That's because Waterman has become fond of climbing in winter a mountain renowned for its malevolent weather even at the height of summer, if such a season can be said to exist on its slopes (Minus 148 Degrees, by Art Davidson, is a well-known book about winter climbing on Denali). On one climb, fluid rapidly filling his lungs, the cold so intense it had a deep-space quality, Waterman came within yards of the summit but wasn't in the least interested in going on. He wanted down, which was fine after all, for the journey had been the point, not the summit. The author shows particular flair in his portraits of two climbers, John Waterman (no relation) and Mugs Stumps, both strange characters, both capable of extraordinary climbing feats, both dead. Indeed, death is found everywhere here--under an avalanche, down a crevasse, in the air. Arresting stories from a Denali junkie. A pleasure to read, although most readers won't be sorry to have missed the trip. (Eight pages of photos--not seen) -- *Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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From reader reviews:

Crystal Scott:

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