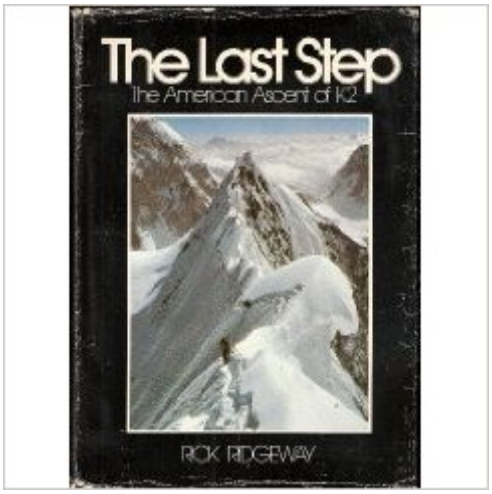
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Last Step: The American Ascent Of K2



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Synopsis

CLICK HERE to download a sample from The Last Step* A mountaineering classic* Conflict, hardship, endurance, triumph -- it's all here in Ridgeway's extraordinary story In September 1978, Rick Ridgeway, Jim Wickwire, Lou Reichardt and John Roskelley stood atop K2, the first Americans ever to achieve this victory. Under the leadership of Jim Whittaker, they and their teammates had spent 67 days on the mountain, nearly all of them above 18,000 feet, where the stresses of high-altitude living, of monotonous food, of confinement in tiny tents for day after day of frustrating storms had worn them down to the core.The Last Step is Rick Ridgeway's inside story of this extraordinary expedition. It's about the people who, battered by the mountain and their isolation, overcame their individual fears, desire, and disappointments to work together to get somebodyÃƒÂ anybodyÃƒÂ to the top of K2. It's about the glorious success the team achieved, and about the perilous bivouac Jim Wickwire spent just below the summit without food, oxygen or shelter in temperatures of -40F. This title is part of our LEGENDS AND LORE series. Click here > to learn more. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The final approach has all the suspense and excitement the reader can bear... A gripper.
----Publisher's Weekly --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Rick Ridgeway is an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, author, photographer, and environmentalist based in Ojai, California. He was included in National Geographic AdventureÃ¢â ¬â„¢s

Ã¢â ¬Å“Hall of FameÃ¢â ¬Â• in 2008-2009. His writings and photographs have appeared in many publications. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

well, I am crazy about reading these books on mountain climbing. I still haven't figured out why they do it, but this book and each of the books I have gathered on this subject entertains me and keeps me reading.

"The Last Step: The American Ascent of K2" is Rick Ridgeway's extremely well written account of the first successful American ascent (and only third overall ascent at the time) of the world's second highest peak. "The Last Step" is the "expedition account" and includes fascinating commentary from several climbers, making for a more rounded view than most climbing books. "The Last Step" is blessed with a stunning collection of photographs which provide a sense of scale both of the beauty of the Karakoram Mountains and of the incredibly difficult terrain the expedition overcame.Ridgeway's account candidly describes the tensions and acrimony that built up in the expedition as it was repeatedly stalled by poor weather in the fall of 1978. The expedition spent 67 days on the mountain, much of it exposed to the debilitating effects of high altitude. The normally driven and competitive natures of good climbers became points of friction as the expedition faced oncoming winter and the likelihood that few if any of the climbers were going to get a shot at the summit.Ridgeway's narrative of the two successful summit attempts is absolutely hair-raising, as men too long in the "dead zone" above 26,000 feet climbed like near-zombies over dangerously exposed snow slopes. One climber, Jim Wickwire, was forced to bivouac overnight in sub-zero temperatures at 28,000 feet after zoning out and lingering too long at the summit.The account makes clear that only the most fit, capable, and single-minded climbers had any chance of topping out on K2 under the conditions faced in 1978. Those climbers with lesser skills or with distractions such as homesickness or as in one case, an affair with another member of the team, were unable or unwilling to risk all for the summit.This book is most highly recommended to fans of the climbing account genre. Although a long read at over 300 pages, others may find it of interest as an indepth look at what happens on world-class climbing expeditions.

Without a doubt, this is one of the most riveting mountaineering books around. Not for the climbing, which is in and of itself gripping, but for the slice of human drama found in the deterioration of relationships amongst various members of the expedition. At times, one is mesmerized by the bad behavior displayed at such high altitudes! One would think that these expeditioners were on

Melrose Place, rather than fighting for their place in mountaineering history on K2, one of the most perilous mountains in the world to ascend.Central to all the squabbling, was the love trangle which developed on the expedition, which was perceived by some of the expeditioners to be an extra marital affair in progress. Though this later proved to be true, at the time it was the source of much denial and hard feelings. It further split the team, which was already divided over who would be chosen to summit, and eroded already existing friendships, while preventing new ones which might have otherwise developed.On top of all this, add in poor weather which caused them to spend about sixty seven days on the mountain, mostly at altitudes over eighteen thousand feet, and you have a recipe for disaster. These expeditioners, however, managed to become the first Americans to ascend K2.Their success in achieving their objective, despite the trials and tribulations which they endured, is testament to their fortitude in putting aside petty, mean spirited concerns and inter-personal conflicts. This painstaking account of the first time summit of K2 by Americans is a must read for all climbing enthusiasts and readers of this genre.

This expedition of the first Americans (and third group) to summit K2 took place in 1978--which for me doesn't seem like ancient history. But while the equipment was relatively modern, communication was archaic by today's standards. No GPS, no satellite phones, no internet uplinks--the wife of one climber learns of his fate by telegram! Also, because this was Pakistan and not Nepal, there were no Sherpas and only a very small number of high altitude porters and none in the final stages.So these guys (and gals--it really wasn't ancient history) did it the old-fashioned way--they trekked in for many days to reach Base Camp, they fixed their own rope and carried all their own equipment and cooked their own food. No team of Sherpas to set up aluminum ladders and make sure everyone gets across them. These folks write letters home and listen to cassette tapes.And yet the story is told with the frankness of modern times--how do you pee at 27,000 feet, how do you deal with adultery on the expedition, and is it really worth it to climb mountains like this, risking death and the possibility of leaving your kids orphaned?Extremely up-close and vivid writing, step by step and ragged breath by ragged breath. I read this on a hot summer day and yet the feeling of frostbite seemed more real than the hot air around me. A captivating story told by a skilled climber who is also a gifted writer.

The author has an easy flowing style. Events are told in a clear, organized style. Emotions and relationships are explored which made me feel that I was on the expedition with them. I have read many mountaineering books, but I missed this one. I am glad it was made into an ebook.

I am a personal friend and former business partner of one of the four climbers on this expedition to reach the summit of K2. I was particularly interested in learning about the relationships and conflicts among the members of this expedition. Ridgeway did not "hold back" on his comments relating to the egos and personal objectives of these climbers. I thought that Wickwire was very fortunate that he did not die near the summit due, in large part, due to his carelessness that resulted from his anxiousness to reach the summit,

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