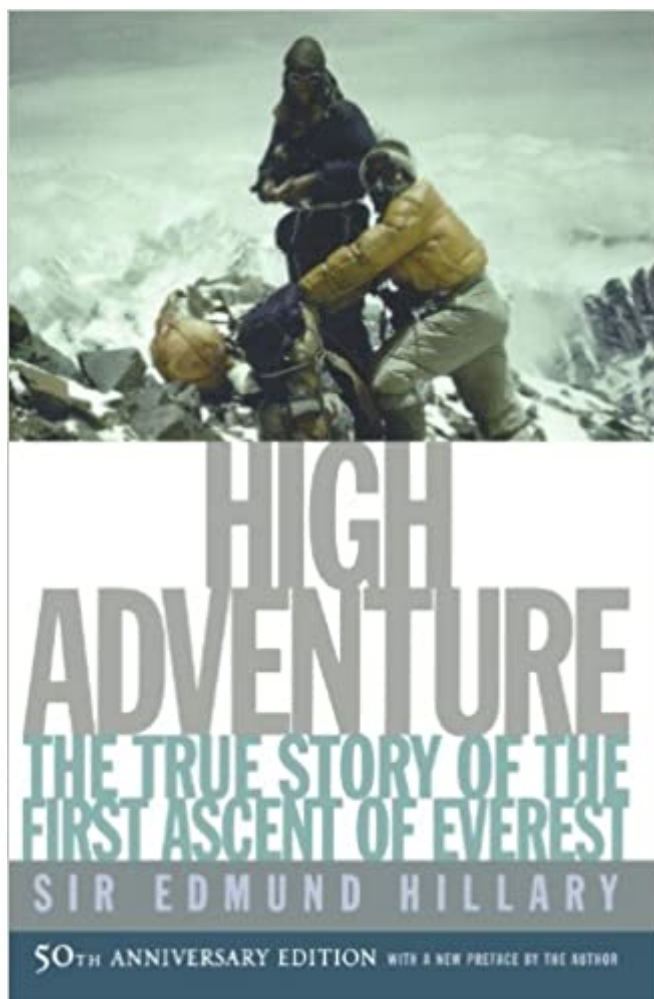


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# High Adventure: The True Story Of The First Ascent Of Everest



## Synopsis

Fear lives among Everest's mighty ice-fluted faces and howls across its razor-sharp crags. Gnawing at reason and enslaving minds, it has killed many and defeated countless others. But in 1953, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay stared into its dark eye and did not waver. On May 29, they pushed spent bodies and aching lungs past the achievable to pursue the impossible. At a terminal altitude of 29,028 feet, they stood triumphant atop the highest peak in the world. With nimble words and a straightforward style, New Zealand mountaineering legend Hillary recollects the bravery and frustration, the agony and glory that marked his Everest odyssey. From the 1951 expedition that led to the discovery of the Southern Route, through the grueling Himalayan training of 1952, and on to the successful 1953 expedition led by Colonel John Hunt, Hillary conveys in precise language the mountain's unforgiving conditions. In explicit detail he recalls an Everest where chaotic icefalls force costly detours, unstable snow ledges promise to avalanche at the slightest misstep, and brutal weather shifts from pulse-stopping cold to fiendish heat in mere minutes. In defiance of these torturous conditions, Hillary remains enthusiastic and never hesitates in his quest for the summit. Despite the enormity of his and Norgay's achievement, he regards himself, Norgay, and the other members of his expedition as hardworking men, not heroes. And while he never would have reached the top without practiced skill and technical competence, his thrilling memoir speaks first to his admiration of the human drive to explore, to understand, to risk, and to conquer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"High Adventure is a well-loved classic of 20th-century mountaineering, written in the first full flush

of achievement by one of that century's truly heroic figures."--Jan Morris, author of *Coronation Everest and Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere*"A gem of a book.... At no point is there any deviation from the same honesty of purpose and simple love of mountaineering which brought him, with those famous 'few more whacks,' to the top."--Times Literary Supplement (on the 1955 edition)"Unquestionably the best account of the lot.... I believe this to be one of the small number of mountaineering books certain to survive."--The Observer (on the 1955 edition)

Sir Edmund Percival Hillary was born in Auckland, New Zealand, on July 20, 1919. On May 29, 1953, he and Nepalese mountaineer Tenzing Norgay reached the summit of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world. He lives in New Zealand.

Book arrived in good shape as described. It was a very detailed account of the Everest climb and others in the prior two years. Some have criticized Hillary for his use of the term "coolies" but I didn't get the sense that he used it derogatorily. I think it was the term used for "porter" in those days. I trekked in the Everest region in 1978 and was present while Hillary worked on the hospital he set up. A sherpa acquaintance told me that he was very highly regarded by the Sherpa people because of his continued assistance to the region after the climb. This book would be of greatest interest to readers who have some familiarity with climbing and glacier exploration. Otherwise, it might be a bit tedious and hard to relate to, due to the detailed descriptions of the climbing.

The funny thing is that people probably eschew this book, thinking it's written in "old fashioned" terminology or it's "just another summit book." Nothing could be further from the truth. Hillary's enthusiasm for mountain climbing punctuates every page (literally; I don't think there's a page in the book that lacks an exclamation point). He talks about the technicalities of climbing with ease and in accessible language, and he regards the mountains as beings in their own right, worthy of respect and awe. In addition, the edition of the book I read, despite being a paperback, was illustrated not only with line drawings reminiscent of Arthur Ransome's books, but with simple maps and diagrams showing exactly where the various glaciers are or the path through the Khumbu icefall (not nearly as simple as later books/authors make it seem!). These diagrams add even more personality to an already-fascinating book, and give the reader a real sense of what these explorers faced. This is an enthralling book that goes along at a great pace and it was definitely over too soon. Give it a try: it's worth at least a dozen of the whiny 70's mountaineering books!

Fantastic autobiography from Sir Edmund Hillary. Enjoyed reading all his accounts in life. I highly recommend this book.

This is Hillary's engaging first person account of his Everest Summit. Overall impression: The first and latter chapters are by far the best. The second and third chapters contain surveying narratives which didn't engage me all that much. I read the book in two days whenever I had a moment to read it... I had it with me at all times because I was dying to read the next page. Great book. What I loved about it: By the time you get to the final two chapters, you feel like you are summing with them. I knew they would make it, of course, but while you are reading you have this suspension of reality and there are moments where you just don't see how they can possibly make it. The description of what he was thinking in these uncharted regions kept me glued! Also, the description and map of the Khumbu icefall left my jaw dropped. These were very brave men! What I didn't like about it: The descriptions of the treks between the camps on Everest (back and forth, back and forth) tended to blend together. I felt like he could have cut some of that narrative (i.e. going back for more supplies, checking on people, etc.) Conclusion: You won't regret buying the book. I can't help but think his goal was to include everything he could remember just to get it documented, even if some of the information doesn't necessarily advance the story you were expecting to read. It's 70% thrill and 30% redundancy or extraneous information. Still a great book. Here is one thing that nags me though. THE BIG QUESTION: Hillary was competitive. He admits he was happy to hear that the Swiss team did not summit. He was not assigned to be the first of his team to summit, yet he does not tell us he was disappointed by that decision! C'mon! He MUST have been. Also, when the first team failed, he didn't admit that a part of him was happy that he had his shot to be the first! That seems like normal human behavior and also fitting with his previous comments. The fact that he didn't talk about his emotions during those events tells me he doesn't want to come off as a bad sport. Add the book to your library!

I'd never want to do something like this but love reading of the hardship and adventure - great book!

Interesting reading that really puts you back in time.

This was written by Ed Hillary himself and is a detailed account of the harrowing adventures that culminated in the summit of Everest. He really writes well for a mountaineer/beekeeper. The pictures are mediocre at best. A must read for any serious alpinist and suitable for anyone with

morbid curiosity of what real men used to accomplish before we had charted routes and newfangled gadgetry to rely on.

This is a good account from Hillary about the day to day struggles of the first ascent of Everest. He tells of the preparations and equipment they had to work with in the 1950's to summit hard and high mountains and of course at that time it was unheard of not to use oxygen.

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