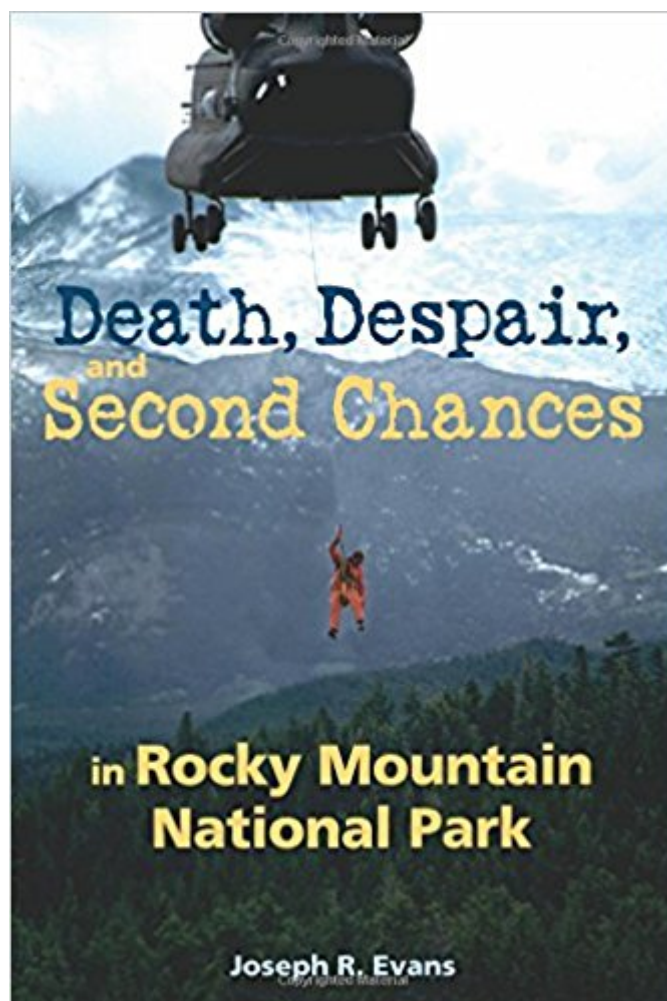


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Death, Despair, And Second Chances In Rocky Mountain National Park



Synopsis

On average, three million people come to Colorado to visit Rocky Mountain National Park every year. Most return home safely, but some do not. Joseph R. Evans details the fates of the almost three-hundred people who met their demise in the park between 1884 and 2009 in the hope that their mistakes might prove instructive to future park visitors. Also included are the stories of those who made it, whether by skill and determination or just sheer luck

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Joseph R. Evans retired in 2006 after thirty-three years as a National Park Ranger. For thirteen years, he was the Chief Ranger of Rocky Mountain National Park. He worked in nine national parks, including assignments in Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone. These parks, along with Rocky Mountain, are recognized as some of the more active parks for search and rescue in the country. He wants you to visit the national parks, and to go home safe and happy. He lives in Estes Park, Colorado.

A National Park junkie, I have become a junkie of books with titles like "Death in Wherever National Park" (Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Big Bend). Partly out of morbid fascination, but also because many of these types of books give interesting accounts of back-country adventure and rescue stories. They also provide excellent advice and warnings of what not to do in rugged terrain. I ordered this book and sent a copy to my seventeen year old son when we started planning a trip to

Rocky Mountain National Park this summer. Longs Peak, the only 14-er in RMNP, drew his attention. Also mine after I read up on the hike and saw it required not only great distance (fifteen miles), but also climbing abilities in addition to hiking skills. Possessing neither climbing experience, nor unsure of my fifty-plus year old ability to do a fifteen mile strenuous hike in rough terrain, Chapter 2 of this book persuaded us both that Longs Peak was beyond our current skill level (ok, it persuaded me....he wasn't entirely persuaded until after the strenuous but enjoyable hike to Chasm Lake at the foot of Longs Peak and 3000 feet below the summit). This book is a compendium of deaths, near-deaths and rescues in RMNP since before its inception. Each chapter is neatly divided (hiking, climbing, road accidents, murders - thankfully only a few of those). The synopses of each case run from detailed to brief as the facts and knowledge dictate. What emerges from the whole is not only a catalogue of incidents, but wise lessons and observations that will make the reader a more knowledgeable outdoorsman about what not to do in terms of risk. Although this book's entire focus is on mishap and rescue in RMNP, when one considers the actual extremely small number of incidents given the three million visitors the park hosts annually, the Park and the Ranger Staff offer everyone a thrilling and safe experience in the outdoors.

Very dry writing, clearly the author's style is based on his decades service writing government reports. And that is the main problem; most of the stories are drawn from the NPS incident report with very little additional information (a few include some information from related newspaper articles). The book's structure is also at fault, there is no flow. He breaks the chapters down by the type of incident; ie, a chapter on climbing falls, one on hiking incidents, one on auto accidents, etc... The book would have benefited from less information, he appears to have reported every death that has occurred in RMNP since its creation, and a few prior to, as well as a few survival stories thrown in. I guess it's a good thing such a documenting has occurred, it just makes for poor reading. There is so little detail on each of the hundreds of people in here the reader can't really understand or connect, and so little setting of the scene the reader can't begin to picture it. Frequently in one brief paragraph the reader is introduced to the participants (often re victims) within a sentence to two disaster strikes, then we get a few more lines on the search/rescue attempt/recovery (in more detail than the intro to the victims) and on to the next. A few times the author did try to set the scene, I think describing spring in the park, but that was pretty far in and seemed out of place by that point. I think this book would be best for RMNP historians, Rangers, or others who are looking for a reference book. Check out Colorado 14er Disasters for a better read.

Read it while working in Rocky Mountain National Park as a park entrance Ranger during the slow times. It was awesome....Excellent read.

This thoroughly researched book is not for the faint of heart. It tells the stories of tragedies in the wilderness of RMNP, but the thread connecting the book together is that with a little precaution, 99.99% of park visits can be absolutely safe and rewarding. My only regret is that I read this book after I visited RMNP, I would have loved to visit some of the sites mentioned, not in a morbid sense, but to see what challenging terrains claimed their victims. I wholeheartedly recommend this book.

I have camped in RMNP several times over the years with my growing family. I realize now, after reading this book, how fortunate we were not to be injured or lost. If you are taking a trip to a wilderness area, read this book and learn! This is not a controlled theme park, folks. Thanks Ranger Joe.

This is a great book for anyone planning a trip to Rocky Mountain National Park. I sat down planning on reading a few chapters but ended up spending most of the night reading. Very informative and well researched. It will make you appreciate that when you visit one of our national parks that you are in an environment that does not always forgive poor decisions. A real page turner.

I enjoyed this well written book. It is amazing what people do out in the parks without proper knowledge of their surroundings.

Interesting reading.

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