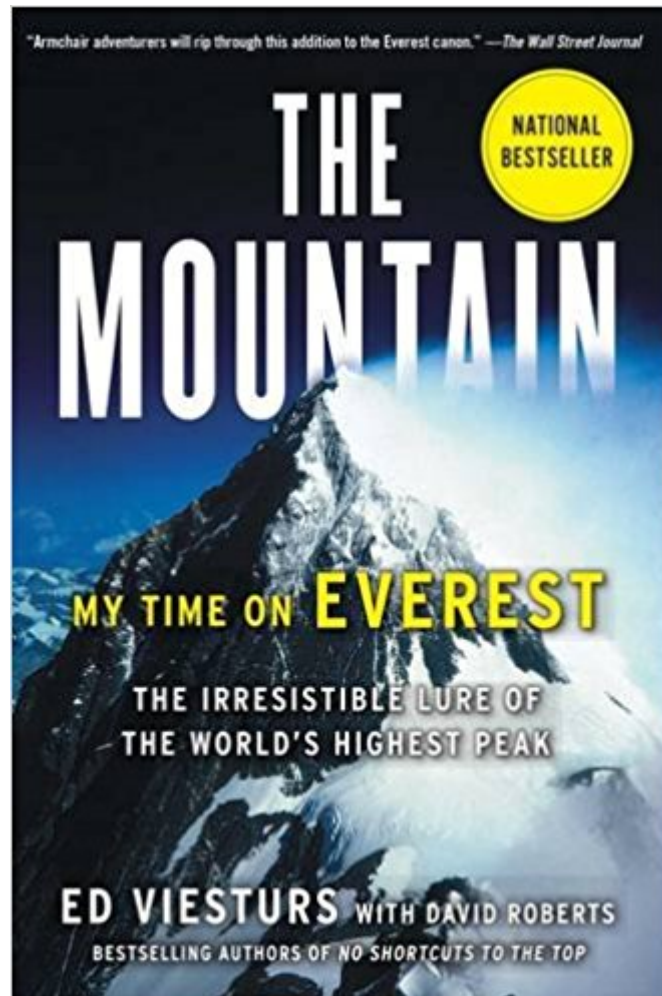




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# The Mountain: My Time On Everest



## Synopsis

In national bestseller *The Mountain*, world-renowned climber and bestselling author Ed Viesturs and cowriter David Roberts paint a vivid portrait of obsession, dedication, and human achievement in a true love letter to the world's highest peak. In *The Mountain*, veteran world-class climber and bestselling author Ed Viesturs—the only American to have climbed all fourteen of the world's 8,000-meter peaks—trains his sights on Mount Everest in richly detailed accounts of expeditions that are by turns personal, harrowing, deadly, and inspiring. The highest mountain on earth, Everest remains the ultimate goal for serious high-altitude climbers. Viesturs has gone on eleven expeditions to Everest, spending more than two years of his life on the mountain and reaching the summit seven times. No climber today is better poised to survey Everest's various ascents—both personal and historic. Viesturs sheds light on the fate of Mallory and Irvine, whose 1924 disappearance just 800 feet from the summit remains one of mountaineering's greatest mysteries, as well as the multiply tragic last days of Rob Hall and Scott Fischer in 1996, the stuff of which *Into Thin Air* was made. Informed by the experience of one who has truly been there, *The Mountain* affords a rare glimpse into that place on earth where Heraclitus's maxim—"Character is destiny"—is proved time and again.

## Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Touchstone; Reprint edition (April 29, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451694741

ISBN-13: 978-1451694741

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 75 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #509,862 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Travel > Asia > Nepal > General #196 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Chinese #583 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Mountaineering > Mountain Climbing

## Customer Reviews

**Jim Whittaker Reflects on Ed Viesturs** On May 1, 1963 Jim Whittaker became the first American to stand atop Mt. Everest, the planet's highest peak. He later led expeditions to K2 resulting in the

first American summit of the world's second-highest mountain--and often considered its most dangerous. In 1990, he returned to Mt. Everest with International Peace Climb, leading a group of mountaineers from the United States, China, and the Soviet Union to the summit--a team that included an up-and-coming climber named Ed Viesturs. For the publication of *The Mountain: My Time on Everest*, Whittaker looks back at his time with Viesturs, as well as his nearly unparalleled high-altitude abilities. Ed and I first began jumping crevasses--and pulling people out of them--on the glaciers of Mt. Rainier in Washington State. At 14,410 feet above sea level, Mt. Rainier is less than half as high as 29,035-foot Mt. Everest, but it has all the snow, ice, rock, storms and altitude necessary to make it a wonderful educator for those who would climb high mountains. Although a generation apart, Ed and I both worked as guides, taking clients who had never climbed before to the summit. As guides, we learned to watch our rope mates closely, because--tied to us--they could kill us. You didn't want to climb with someone who was NOT afraid of heights. Eventually, separated by almost three decades, we each reached the top of the world. On May 1, 1963, along with Sherpa Nawang Gombu, I was lucky enough to become the first American to summit Mt. Everest. On May 7, 1990, as a member of the Mt. Everest International Peace Climb, of which I was the leader, Ed reached the highest point on earth, without the use of bottled oxygen. Our team included climbers from the then Soviet Union, China, Tibet and America, joining together for a "summit on the summit," demonstrating what could be achieved through diplomacy and friendship. It was on this climb that I saw Ed exercise his leadership and guiding skills, along with his incredible ability to climb up and down, up and down, and up and up and up. There are just 14 mountains on earth that stick up into the "Death Zone"--above 8,000 meters--and Mt. Everest, Qomolangma, Goddess Mother of the World is the highest. My friend, Ed Viesturs, has climbed them all without bottled oxygen, the first and only American to do so. Mt. Everest he's done more than once. Much more. Now, imagine this: While breathing bottled oxygen, I was taking three to four breaths with every step on the upper slopes of Everest, literally panting for hours and hours to the top. Ed has climbed the 14 highest peaks on earth, taking three to four, six to eight, 10 to 12 to 15 breaths to a step as he ascended. He says, "When I get to 15 breaths a step I begin to wonder if I should turn around." Is there any wonder his climbing friends honor him by referring to Ed as "an ANIMAL?" Yet Ed has retained his humility and is warm and friendly. He has a good sense of humor and he is just a nice person. He is unique. Read his new book (and his several others) and see if you can figure this guy out. --Jim Whittaker, October 2013 Learn more about Jim Whittaker and the first successful ascent of Mt. Everest in *A Life on the Edge*, including a new forward by Ed Viesturs. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“Mr. Viesturs has crafted a breezy tour through his many Everest ascents. . . . Armchair adventurers will rip through this addition to the Everest canon, and for anyone not intimate with Everest’s adventurous history, *The Mountain* marks a fine beginning.” (The Wall Street Journal) “Viesturs peppers the narrative with commonsense wisdom . . . but the book’s best moments come when he focuses on the unsung Everest achievements that inspire him. The tale of the Polish expedition that made the first winter ascent and the badass exploits of little-known Swiss climber Erhard Loretan are a welcome distraction from all the dead bodies.” (Men’s Journal) “Fans of adventure, mountaineering, extreme sports, and Everest history will thoroughly enjoy Viesturs’s latest book.” (Library Journal) “In this amiable history/memoir hybrid . . . Viesturs is a fountain of firsthand knowledge and straightforward narration, and the book makes for a good read. As the only American who has summited the world’s 14 highest peaks without bottled oxygen, Viesturs has a different ruler than the rest of us by which to measure risk.” (Publishers Weekly) “Unearths some interesting tidbits that may be well-known to his community but new to laymen. The author, who has been lauded for his compassion and assistance to other climbers, also brings an unexpected attribute: attitude.” (Kirkus Reviews) “This book is Ed’s love letter and farewell to Everest. . . . It is written in an engaging, approachable manner that will have you turning the pages just to find out what happens next. Whether you routinely visit the Himalaya on your own adventures or find yourself out of wind simply going up a flight of stairs, we wholeheartedly recommend this book.” (Kraig Becker Wegner Adventure Blog) “A detailed, nicely told account of a man’s endurance and perseverance in achieving a singular goal.” (Publishers Weekly) “Viesturs and Roberts have written an exhaustively researched and wonderfully compelling history of the most fascinating and dangerous of the Himalayan giants.” (David Breashears, mountaineer and director of Everest,) “An American master of the climb | Viesturs’s you-are-there narration communicates effortlessly the enormous effort, and high adventure, of scaling K2.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) “Magic . . . [An] outstanding piece of nonfiction.” (Christopher Reich, bestselling author of *Rules of Vengeance*,) “A compelling story of dedication, desperation, danger, derring-do, and devotion (physical and spiritual). Fans of extreme-sport books, especially tales of high adventure, will want to add this one to their collections.” (Booklist) “From the drama of the peaks, to the struggle of making a living as a professional climber, to the basic how-tos of life at 26,000 feet, *No Shortcuts to the Top* is fascinating reading.” (Aron Ralston, author of *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*,) “From his earliest climbs on the peaks of the Pacific Northwest to his final climb up the Himalayan

mountain of Annapurna, Viesturs offers testimony to the sacrifices (personal and professional) in giving your life over to a dream, as well as the thrill of seeing it through. — (Publishers Weekly)

Sort of a strange book that isn't quite what it claims to be. I expected more of a personal account of Viesturs's Everest climbs. Instead, about two-thirds of the book is simply a rehash of previous expeditions, from the British attempts in the 20s up to the present day. Trouble is, most of this stuff is readily available in much more detail elsewhere. If you've read Unsworth's Everest, you've already trudged over most of this ground, with the exception of a couple of the later expeditions, and there are many other fine books covering the individual expeditions. What you have here is a breezy, once-over-lightly overview of the history of Everest that's only slightly enhanced by Viestur's perspective. The remaining third of the book that does deal with his own climbs is somewhat disappointing too, as he's often reduced to saying (in effect): "I won't go into this in any detail because I've already covered it another book." One wonders exactly why this book was written. It smacks of a publisher's idea for recycling old material. On the positive side, it's a pleasant enough read, and if you haven't read much about the history of Everest, this would probably be a fine introduction.

Ed Viesturs, America's most successful Himalyan climber, devotes about a third of The Mountain to his personal experiences on Mount Everest (which have involved large and small expeditions, and various routes up the mountain); the remainder of the book covers what he believes to be "some of the most visionary deeds in the long chronicle of mountaineering." Although he considers Everest not the "most interesting or most challenging" of 8,000-meter peaks, Viesturs claims that "no mountain in the world has a richer or more varied history than Everest." Given his commitment to the mountain, Viesturs has spent a cumulative total of two years participating in 11 Everest expeditions—his views on the subject command respect. He is unhappy with much of the conventional wisdom regarding Everest—he wrote this book partly to "counter the sordid caricature of Everest as a circus for dilettantes" that resulted from some accounts of the 1996 disaster. Viesturs does not believe the 1996 climbers were "clueless yuppies"; and he feels that guiding a client can be "a morally admirable act." But, readers interested in Viesturs's comments on

his 1996 experiences will have to read two other books in addition to *The Mountain: A No Shortcuts to the Top: Climbing the World's 14 Highest Peaks*, and *The Will to Climb: Obsession and Commitment and the Quest to Climb Annapurna--the World's Deadliest Peak*. For those unfamiliar with the history of Everest climbs, this book can serve as a useful introduction to the subject. Those who have read Viesturs's other books, and those who know something about the history of Everest, will find in *The Mountain* much that is familiar; but even they may be enlightened by Viesturs's impressions of the major expeditions, and his descriptions of his own climbs and of the men with whom he climbed at one time or another.

• Carlos Carsolio, Scott Fischer, Rob Hall, Tom Hornbein, John Roskelley, Eric Simonson, Jim Wickwire, and Krzysztof Wielicki. Like some of Viesturs's other books, *The Mountain* is organized in a curious non-chronological sequence. It begins with Viesturs's 1987 climb up the Great Couloir (North Side); then drops back to the 1920s British expeditions; then moves ahead to Viesturs's 1988 and 1989 efforts on the Kangshung Face and the 1990 International Peace Climb; then drops back to 1930s British expeditions, followed chronologically by the 1950-1953 U.S., Swiss and British expeditions; Viesturs's 1993 solo attempt on the Great Couloir, his 1994 and 1995 climbs through the South Col with Rob Hall; it then drops back again to the probably apocryphal 1952 Soviet expedition, the 1960 Chinese expedition, the 1963 American Mount Everest Expedition, the 1996 tragedy and the IMAX expedition, and the 1997 NOVA expedition; then back to the 1972 and 1975 British Southwest Face expeditions, the 1981 and 1983 U.S. Kangshung Face expeditions; then back to the 1980 Polish Winter climbs; and further back to Reinhold Messner's 1978 and 1980 climbs, and then ahead to the 1986 efforts of Jean Troillet, Erhard Loretan, and Pierre Beghin. The organization of the text is of course the author's prerogative; but I find it hard to see what is gained by this peculiar presentation. It is difficult to quarrel with the selection of expeditions with which Viesturs has chosen to deal, or with the amount of space he devotes to each, although he allots relatively few pages to Hillary and Tenzing's 1953 climb—the first to reach the summit. Some have doubted that Chinese climbers actually reached the summit in 1960, but Viesturs, after mentioning evidence that casts doubt on the success of this attempt, is inclined to “give the [Chinese] climbers the benefit of the doubt.” He does not, however, offer much explanation for why he accepts the Chinese claims. (Such other experts as Chris Bonington, Jochen Hemmleb, and Tom Holzel, have examined the evidence and concluded that the Chinese did reach the summit.)

Viesturs's description of the 1990 Peace Climb presents some interesting insights. The Mountain includes 16 pages of photographs (mainly in color), a 2-page bibliography, and a 12-page index. It lacks any photographs or diagrams showing the climbing routes of the various expeditions.

I have a real fear of heights, I liked the author. Ed Viesturs demonstrated integrity, stuck to his vision and was a very concerned and caring person. I read this book because my son "Don" is a climber and I wanted more information regarding what drives a person to take on these challenges. I think every climber should read this book and / or every worrisome parent or spouse of a climber should read this book by Ed. Viesturs. Ed has put my negative thoughts about my son climbing to rest. I will live continue to live with my fear of heights. Dad "Bill" Jupiter, Florida

I'm currently obsessed with anything I can get my hands on about Everest, and this book was a wonderful testament to the majestic mountain I have no urge to climb, but can't read enough about. A great history and an easy read make this a book I'd definitely recommend and read again.

Reading about mount Everest is my guilty pleasure. Ed Viesturs has the right to talk about Everest and draw some conclusions. He has been there so many times. His calculated climbs and integrity in the face of the hardest conditions are very impressive. Thank you, Ed, for taking us with you in your amazing adventures.

I have climbed Mount Everest myself, and reading Mr. Viesturs' personal experiences over so many years and his gentle and puristic approach, gives me a belief that there is still more to Everest than meets the layman's eyes. The book is also a precious dive into the climbing community's most honoured icons. Mountaineers such as Bonington, Shipton, Abruzzi and Breashers and their feats on the world's highest peaks are wonderfully described and historically accurate. Viesturs describes the true hardship that meets the mountaineers in a factual and realistic way. The stories of his many and often unbelievable attempts on Everest takes the reader on a fantastic journey. It's a page-turner - a true gem of a book. Lars, Norway

I have read all of Ed's books. No Shortcuts to the Top is a great book about Ed's climbs in general but he followed that up with a series of books about specific mountains. The latest of these is The Mountain, devoted to the world's tallest peak, Mt. Everest. Ed does a great job of blending personal

experiences he has had on Everest with stories of other climbers and general historical information. It's a great read, is very informative, and while Ed does on occasion reference stories and anecdotes from his other books, he does not recycle the stories but rather mentions them in passing and directs you to the book that discusses them in depth if you want to learn more. Keep 'em coming Ed!

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