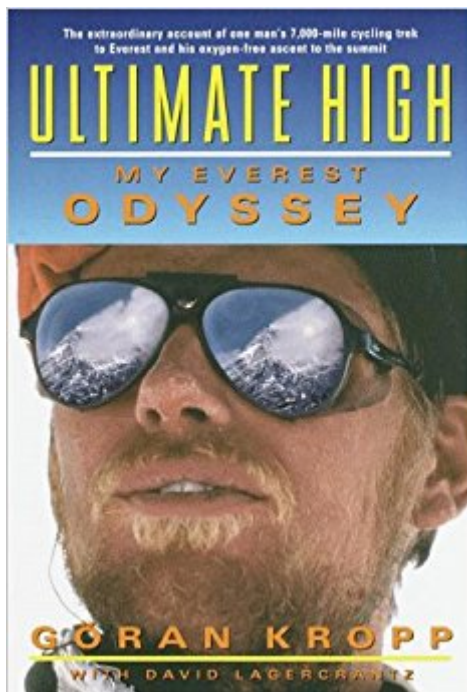


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Ultimate High: My Everest Odyssey



Synopsis

Ultimate HighMy Everest Odyssey"On October 16, 1995, [GÃ¶ran Kropp] had left Stockholm on a custom-built bicycle loaded with 240 pounds of gear, intending to travel round-trip from sea level in Sweden to the top of Everest entirely under his own power, without Sherpa support or bottled oxygen. It was an exceedingly ambitious goal, but Kropp had the credentials to pull it off." -Jon Krakauer, Into Thin Air

Readers of Jon Krakauer's bestselling *Into Thin Air* will recall GÃ¶ran Kropp, the remarkable Swedish solo climber who loves to do what others label impossible. His goal was to reach and climb Mount Everest using his own physical means and without any outside assistance. In doing so, he would earn a place in the record books with the most self-contained combined approach and climb of Mount Everest ever accomplished.

Kropp's Everest quest began 7,000 miles away, in Stockholm, where, at age twenty-nine, he set out by bicycle for Kathmandu, towing behind him nearly everything he'd need to live for a year. In this riveting first-person narrative, Kropp puts his own unique spin on the concept of adventure as he recounts his four-month trek across Europe and Asia, during which he was robbed, assaulted with a baseball bat, almost shot in Turkey, and nearly stoned in Iran. When he left the staging ground in Kathmandu in April 1996, he became the first ever to carry his equipment--all 143 pounds--up 17,100 feet to Everest Base Camp.

Kropp's first attempt at scaling Everest unassisted ended in frustration when he was forced to turn back only 350 feet, one hour, from the summit, his strength drained, his morale crushed. Despite this setback, and in the face of rapidly deteriorating weather that would result in the deadliest season in Everest's history, Kropp steeled himself for a second attempt. Just days after the legendary storm that claimed the lives of eight climbers, he tried again and made it to the top of the world--without Sherpa aid, without bottled oxygen. Within a few days, he loaded up his bike for the equally harrowing 7,000-mile trek back to Stockholm.

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Customer Reviews

Why just climb Everest when you can climb it without supplemental oxygen? Why just climb it without oxygen when you can climb it alone? And why fly to Nepal to climb Everest when you can bicycle all the way there? Apparently, questions such as these occurred to GÃ¶ran Kropp, a Swede with a taste for adventure and a desire for the Ultimate High. In October 1995, Kropp set out from Sweden with a bicycle, a trailer, and over 200 pounds of equipment. Over the next four months, he cycled some 7,000 miles across Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, and Nepal. By the time he arrived in Kathmandu, Kropp had been shot at, pelted with rocks, and offered the madam's daughter--free of charge--in a Hungarian brothel. After carrying his own equipment up to Everest Base Camp, Kropp found himself surrounded by other climbers, all waiting for a break in the weather so they could attempt the summit. Many books have been written about that disastrous season on Everest, notably Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* and Anatoli Boukreev's *The Climb*. Kropp adds little of substance to the story, engaging mainly in camp gossip about who was sleeping with whom and "outing" climbers who lied about reaching summits. Even Kropp's account of his own climb is somewhat suspenseless--though some readers will be relieved that he doesn't go into too much detail about his physical breakdown. More tiresome is Kropp's clear disdain for climbers who use supplemental oxygen. ("Mount Everest is not 29,028 feet tall if the mountain is scaled by a climber wearing an oxygen mask.") He also despises climbers who "see Everest and other high peaks reduced to trophies kept in a china cabinet"--though his "Ultimate Mountain List" (he's already climbed 16 of the 22) seems a bit like a trophy room itself. After he finally reached the summit--on his third attempt in under a month--Kropp spent a few weeks recuperating in Kathmandu and then hopped on his bike for the long and rugged ride home. Not satisfied, Kropp is already planning and training for his next adventure, to take place in 2004: sailing from Sweden to Antarctica, skiing to the South Pole, and returning--all solo. That he is only just learning to sail doesn't dissuade him--"I like to jump headfirst into new projects." *Ultimate High* is proof that he's determined--and crazy--enough to complete them. --Sunny Delaney

On Mount Everest, May 1996 was the cruelest monthThe month eight climbers died on the

mountain, the month that has been recounted already in books by Jon Krakauer, David Breshears, Anatoli Boukreev, Matt Dickinson and others. Half a year earlier, in October 1995, Swedish climber Kropp—the second person in the world to reach the summit of K2 without the aid of oxygen—set out from Stockholm on an 8000-mile bicycle trip to Katmandu, with 250 pounds of gear and the intention of scaling Everest without oxygen. Kropp's account, written with journalist Lagercrantz, is straightforward, yet ultimately trifling. Too much space is wasted on self-absorbed anecdotes (e.g., Kropp, during what he calls his "wild period," mounting the stage at a rock concert and shouting "The government is imperialistic!"). The world according to Kropp is filled with too many silly exclamations ("This is totally awesome!") and too little insight. But when Kropp refrains from glib self-absorption, his story is as gripping as the adventures of Indiana Jones. Along the way, Kropp encounters ravenous wild dogs, numerous free lunches, blizzards, stone-throwing youngsters, a hilarious misadventure in a brothel in Hungary, weddings in Romania, gunfire in Turkey. It's an excellent adventure, but very mediocre adventure writing. Color inserts not seen by PW. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Kropp was very honest and most candid in this book. However, his storytelling was amateur at best. But that shouldn't take away from his outstanding achievement. After finishing the book I certainly was left with the impression that it was an extraordinary accomplishment. However, his solo - unassisted climb up Everest was not the only story that spring in 1996 and if the reader wants to know more of the tragic events during that time, I would not recommend this book.

If you read and enjoyed Jon Krakauer's "Into Thin Air", you will enjoy this one. Kropp's narrative takes place the same year as the fateful expedition in Krakauer's book. Interesting to get a different perspective on that debacle. Not to diminish Kropp's own achievement, riding a bicycle from Stockholm to Everest, while towing all the gear and food he'd need for the whole trip, and climbing un-assisted, without bottled oxygen. And you won't believe what he has planned next.

Goran Kropp made an outrageous challenge sound reasonable. Everest has been climbed; climber without oxygen, in Alpine style; now the final step, to cycle with all his gear, from home, a big enough journey for almost anyone. I think that if Goran had lived in the English-speaking world, he would have been hugely more famous, but his achievement passed almost without trace. I greatly enjoyed this book, which is written in a straightforward matter-of-fact way. I have recommended it to a wide range of people, and I recommend it to you, reading this.

This was a great read coupled with the wikipedia entry that gives more before and after context. It's a pity this book was withdrawn -- apparently Goran named the wrong drunk in base camp and lost a lawsuit. Seems like they could have published a corrected version.

Kropp & Lagercrantz's book *Ultimate High* is the latest in my Everest obsession which began with my reading *Into Thin Air*. This book has a proper index (I hate books that do not have a proper index), though it has no table of contents(?) and at the conclusion of the 'story' are excellent lists: Kropp's "Ultimate Mountain List" (I had wanted to read a list like this since reading *Into Thin Air*), Kropp's packing list (hmmmm), and the Special Summiteer List (very helpful & informative). The book was well-crafted and reveals Kropp's thoughts, feelings and actions on his trek. The authors do a good job of letting the reader see what Kropp saw! I liked the book and the story, but at the conclusion, though I admired what Kropp did and how he did it, I didn't like Kropp very much. I was left with the impression of a cold, very self-absorbed, somewhat shallow, ecologically-minded tough-guy. I do recommend buying this book, however; it is worth the purchase price just for the lists!

Amazing adventure odyssey. It reminded me of Shackleton's Endurance story to the South Pole. If you enjoyed *Into Thin Air*, read this book. This is the biggest BHAG I've ever heard about.

Great service! The book was exactly as described, and received by my son in a very short amount of time, considering he lives abroad. Thank you!

Goran shoots straight from the hip. His bicycle adventure from Sweden to Everest is as interesting as the Everest story itself. The reader learns about the unexpected reactions of various cultures to his riding through their lands. I had given my copy away, and bought this copy again, as I wanted to read it for the third time.

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