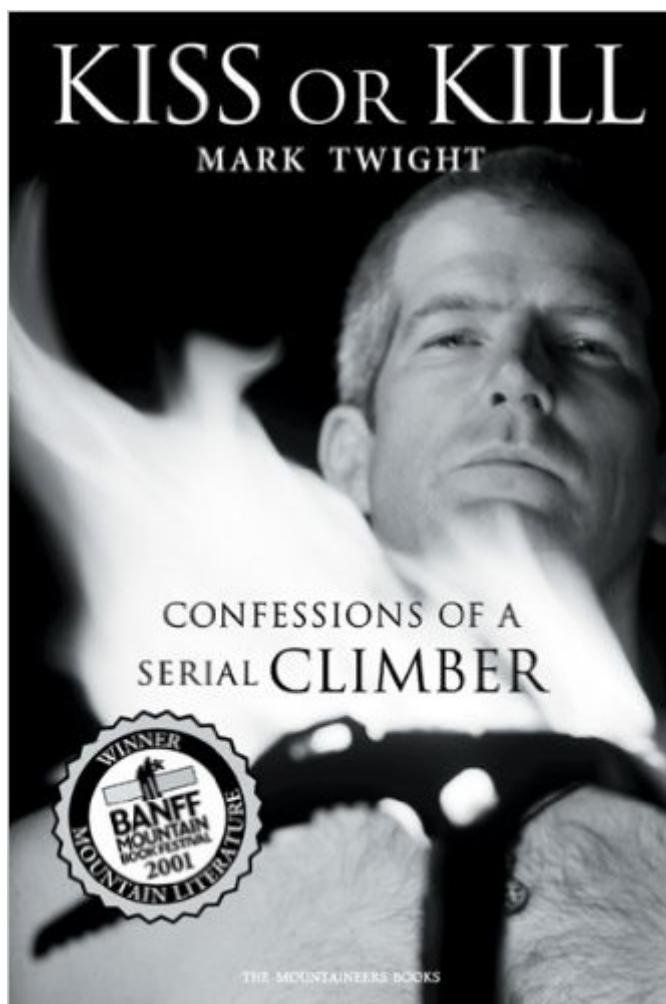


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Kiss Or Kill: Confessions Of A Serial Climber



Synopsis

* Mark Twight's collected works, some never before published in North America * Includes dramatic black and white mountaineering photos * Features brand new epilogues to all of the storiesThey call him Dr. Doom. Raving and kicking against mediocrity, his anger and pain simmer close to the surface. He speaks and writes the language of the punk music that defined him. He is extreme alpinist Mark Twight, and he doesn't back down from the truth. He's a one-man literary punk band. If you have any doubt, here comes his knockout punch: the only collection of writing Twight swears he'll ever publish. Kiss or Kill: Confessions of a Serial Climber is raw, unfiltered Twight. These author's cut are the real deal, not the homogenized fluff offered up by magazine editors who are often unwilling to offend. Twight's words make it clear that climbing is only distantly about the summit. Several of these pieces are new to U.S. readers. Twight edited all of the selections and appended each with a current author's note; confessing his inspiration, events that followed, and lessons learned (or not learned, some might say). It adds up to a frightfully lucid look into Twight's personal life as both man and hardcore alpine climber. The dissection scares me sometimes...Whether railing against the spinelessness of American siege-style mountaineering, admitting addiction to pushing the bounds of the possible, or reveling in his ability to cut away anything in life that holds him back, Twight never blinks. Along the way, there is the drama of new and epic routes, unbreakable bonds between climbing partners, and Twight's evolution as a climber and a man. He tells every story in a unique, in-your-face style. Kiss or Kill is not an easy read. It may scare some readers-but that's the point. "I want this book to help you recognize your own anger, which will help you understand mine", says Twight. "Somewhere out there somebody understands these words and knows they matter. They were written in blood, learned by heart."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

From Chamonix to the Himalayas to Peak Communism in the Pamirs, extreme climbing has been Twight's response to "stupidity and mediocrity" and at times it is even "a tool to forestall suicide." Following Extreme Alpinism, this volume collects more than 12 years of Twight's extreme outdoor journalism for such magazines as Climbing, Outside and Men's Journal. Punk rock lyrics pepper these essays, providing context and form for his rage, cynicism and obsessive, masculine drive. Avalanches, rotten ice, the deaths of fellow climbers, the rescue of others, dwindling food supplies, lost tents at 18,000 feet Twight survives mortal dangers and tragedies, writing, "No matter what I did, the suffering I experienced did not satisfy me. I had to have more." Twight's in-your-face style is both his strength and his weakness fans of Henry Rollins or Charles Bukowski may find a sport nut analogue in Twight. Deeply personal, arrogant, grandiose, thrilling and unapologetic, this record of his 15-year career will gratify and repel extreme athletes, their admirers and their detractors. 40 b&w photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mountain climber and coauthor (with Jim Martin) of Extreme Alpinism, Twight has here compiled a collection of previously published articles from Outside, Men's Journal, and other U.S. and European magazines. The articles have been revised for this book, often restoring their original length and language, and each one has a "2000 Author's Note" that gives background material on the original article and the climb itself. Twight's mountaineering experiences led him all over Asia, Europe, and North America and are presented in chronological order. The entire book is about mountain climbing and climbers, and because it is so full of personal reactions and experiences, it reads somewhat like the extended ego trip of a Sixties throwback. While Kiss or Kill may be of interest to public libraries with extensive mountaineering collections, it will be of little interest to most libraries. George M. Jenks, Bucknell Univ., Lewisburg PA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This isn't your typical climbing/adventure book that goes through all the trials and tribulations of a particular climb or expedition. It's much more introspective and gives you a glimpse into the author's

(Mark Twight a world-famous Alpinist who is now in his 50's and is into a lot of different things) mind. It's a compendium of his articles and essays published in the past. The author presents each piece pretty much as it appeared when first published, then has a couple of updates at later dates--penned several years later and then several years after that. It's an interesting presentation--you get a feel for the changes in the author's perspective over time. Some of the early stuff is pretty overwrought, as Mark admits in his updates. It's also not nearly as well-written as later material. It's interesting to see the great improvement as he learns the writer's craft. Aside from the very early stuff, the writing is top notch, at least in my opinion. There are enough great climbing stories to satisfy, but for me the best stuff are Mark's insights into some of the psychological (or dare I say spiritual?) aspects of climbing both as an individual and with friends with whom one shares unique and un-duplicatable challenges of the highest order. He also has a lot of good takes on the climbing "scene" as it has evolved over the years and, sadly, seems to be going the way of all things in this consumer-oriented, "star" based culture. C'est la vie. There is supposed to be a movie coming out that Twight has some role in about climbing in the French Alps. Can't wait to see it. I'll never be a climber, but there's a lot to admire and aspire to here.

i saw a slideshow by mark in rural idaho sometime in the late 90's, having no idea who he was. he had two slide projectors that were set to alternate slides on the same screen seemingly synchronized to some music while he spoke. my strongest recollection of the show was the end, where he had images of church windows and graves from climbers crossfade while he spoke of all those lost from his circle. that part went on for quite some time. i immediately went out and got his book 'extreme alpinism', which is sitting dogeared on a table here in the room some 15+ years later. my aspirations to achieve my own personal bests in all areas of my life were deeply influenced by this book as it was the first thing i ever read that just cut the fat away completely on what is possible. most interesting is his thoughts on suffering and action. this book, 'kiss or kill', contains his writings over the years, many of which are on his 'gym jones' website these days. if you have no interest in ruminations on a take no prisoners/excuses approach to climbing/life there is no point in reading this book and then giving it a poor review. i find it deeply candid considering mark is at heart, a punk, willing to put his money where his mouth is. the front page of 'extreme alpinism' has this quote: "for my mentors i owe you everything, strategy is beyond the techniques, technique is beyond the tools, one, two, ten thousand." after 15 years, i am still coming to understand this.....

Loved this book. The experiences really spoke to some of my darker days. And excellent writing.

You come away with a few things from this collection of Mark Twight's writing, he is a no BS kind of guy, fearless on a couple levels, and of the old saying "it's better to be lucky than good" he is both. His climbing resume and writings on how he lived his life show that he is a put up or shut up kind of guy. He is fearless, but not reckless, in his climbng. He is also fearless for putting his essays out there. His early work is clearly ruff, full of youthful bravado and angst. As he progress, he becomes a damn fine writer. You have to respect that he would put it all out there for public consumption and expose himself to the guile of his "peers."Twight is also deep and reflective. You can see he mellows with age, but is intense at the same time. His losses in the mountains -friends, climbing partners, relationships- affected him and gave him perspective; his admission that he never expected to live past 26 shows how looking back, he is happy he has.The underlying theme as I understood it was a philosophy of respect for pushing yourself as hard as you can and then giving more - even if you are not a world class climber or athlete, you get respect if you give maximum effort to your endevor and you need to develope the mind to know when you did and not let external factors affect your self analysis - you do it for you and you are your own toughest competition.The people who critique this collection or Twight as ellitest or an egomaniac aren't digesting it. The essay on the weekend warrior mentality is very insightful and can be applied to anything you do in life.Twight is a facinating guy, with interesting insights. This is not light reading and slightly dark, so my suggestion is to read it slow; put it down, think about it and come back to it. The climbing essays are good, but be aware that much of the book expouses his philosophy.

A charming coming-of-age tale of a an inauspicious young man who searches widely for what is good in the world, only to find that what he was looking for was in front of him all along. Twight's congenial and oftentimes witty prose contains the emotional maturity and holistic perspective hearkening that of Viktor Frankl, all whilst maintaining the levity of a Bill Bryson read. Non-climbers will find value in the wisdom of this book - proving that although there are many paths, in the end true value in life is contained in the calculated reflection on the needs of others. A great gift for the special young person in your life!

This is a collection of no-nonsense to-the-point essays, mostly introspective and existential in nature, written by Mark Twight while he undertook daring, and some might even say reckless, exploits in alpinism. These essays are not for the faint of heart, and are sure to prompt introspection of our own existence. Mark's pain and brutal honesty is our gain.

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