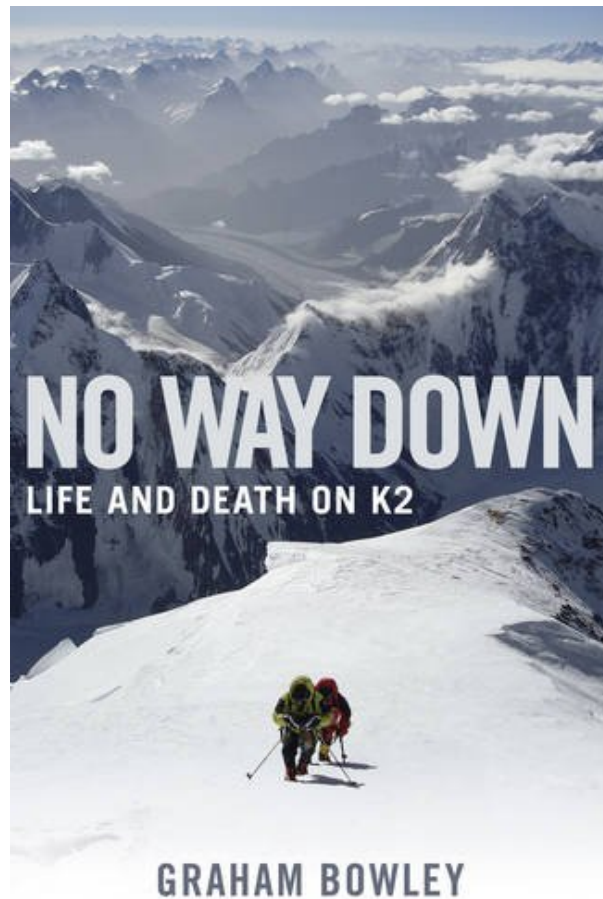
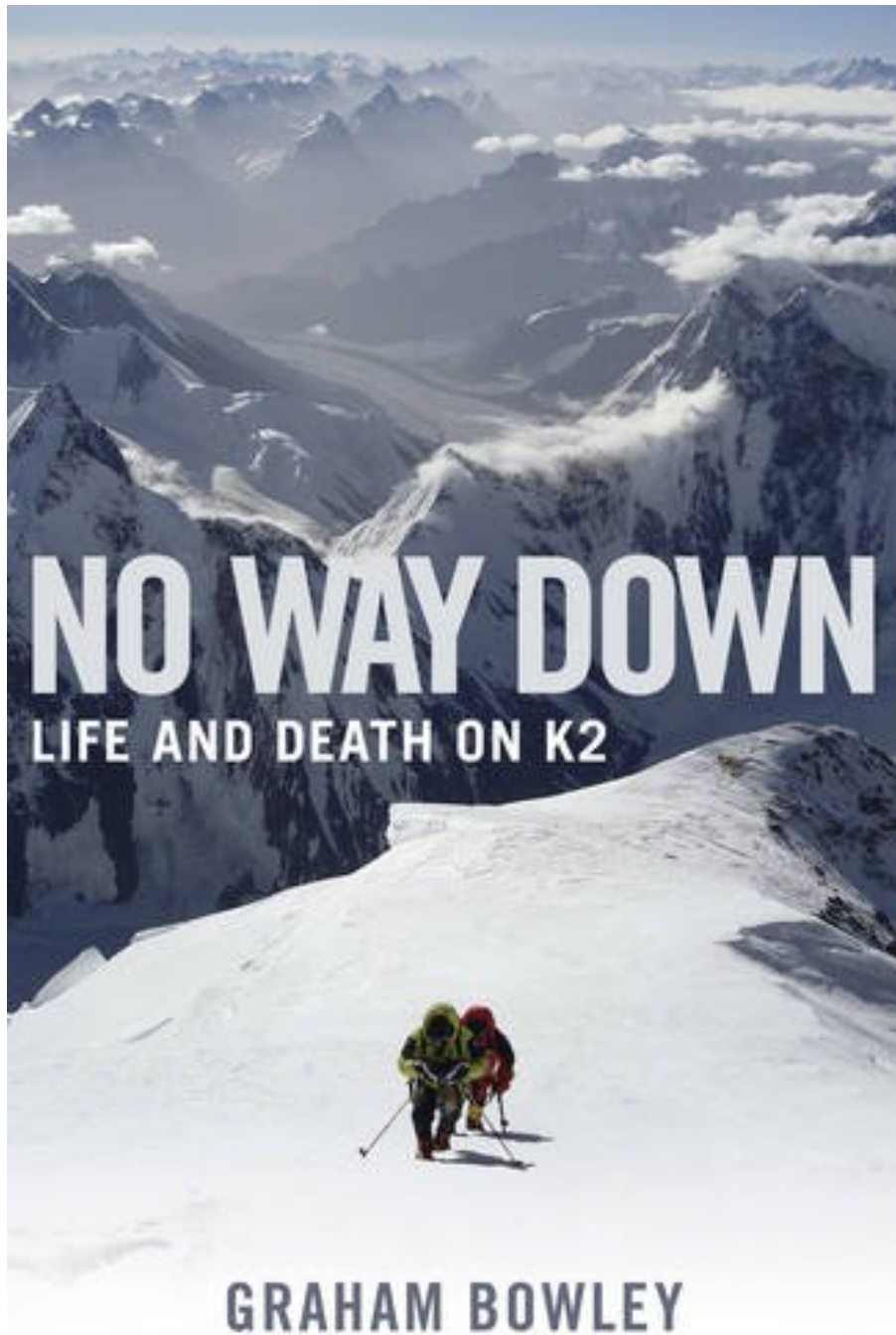


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With its near-perfect pyramid shape, the 28,251-foot K2—the world's second-highest mountain, some 800 feet shorter than the legendary Everest hundreds of miles to the south—has lured serious climbers for decades. In 2008, near the end of a brief climbing season cut even shorter by bad weather, no fewer than ten international teams—some experienced, others less prepared—crowded the mountain's dangerous slopes with their Sherpas and porters, waiting to ascend.

Finally, on August 1, they were able to set off. But hindered by poor judgment, lack of equipment, and overcrowded conditions, the last group did not summit until nearly 8 p.m., hours later than planned. Then disaster struck when a huge ice chunk from above the Bottleneck, a deadly 300-foot avalanche-prone gully just below the summit, came loose and destroyed the fixed guide ropes. More than a dozen climbers and porters still above the Bottleneck—many without oxygen and some with no headlamps—faced the near impossibility of descending in the blackness with no guideline and no protection. Over the course of the chaotic night, some would miraculously make it back. Others would not.

Based on in-depth interviews with surviving climbers and many Sherpas, porters, and family and friends of the deceased, *No Way Down* reveals for the first time the full dimensions of this harrowing drama.

- Sales Rank: #8650034 in Books
- Published on: 2010
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .83" w x 6.02" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback

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Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A Good, Yet Western Approach

By Solowe

No Way Down by Graham Bowley is a good book concerning the 2008 K2 Tragedy. I have read every book and account concerning this incident and feel this one deserves 4 out of 5 stars. After a brief chapter of trekking to Base Camp, we jump right into Camp IV and summit day. I'm not sure the reader is able to comprehend all of the emotions that assisted in creating the 'summit fever' without understanding just how long most of the teams had been waiting for the summit attempt. In addition to the 2008 summit, there are a good number of previous and more historical ascents documented as well, especially concerning Art Gilkey that lead to the Gilkey Memorial. I do commend Bowley on his research into avalanches and seracs and his explanation of these items right when they need to be mentioned. There is a great epilogue that details the author's adventures travelling to interview as many of the survivors and family of the deceased. Bowley's own opinion into the conflicting, if not controversial accounts concerning the final moments of Gerard McDonnell are well documented and almost convince me. The only thing that is missing is (all of) the Sherpa's stories. Reading *One Mountain Thousand Summits* or *Buried in the Sky* tells more of their story and doesn't have the Western approach only. I would recommend this book in addition to the previous mentioned to really grasp this tragedy.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Short and sweet...but wish it was long and rich, frankly

By Stantz

No question you'll finish this book in a plane ride. The story is gripping and told with the velocity of a pulp fiction adventure story, and the "I can't believe this actually happened" factor will propel you right to the end. The author does a great job of organizing facts for an event he wasn't on site to experience (a critique I've noticed from others who prefer a Krakauerian perspective), and for the minimal time it takes to read, it's worth the effort.

That said, there is something really, really light about this book. I was absolutely surprised at how little of it is devoted to either the history of K2 or an analysis of the actual events, really anything that would give this book some girth. As it is, it's bare bones. Maybe it does take the perspective of an actual climber like Krakauer to make this sort of thing feel personal or real, or to give it some context. As it is, it almost feels like one of those "An Oral History of..." magazine articles, where everyone from a particular event is interviewed, and then their quotes are put in chronological order, with little more added. It's interesting, but it's also...flat, in a way.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that this book doesn't stick with you. You'll read it, be enthralled for a couple hours by the "oh my god, how can this get worse" factor...and then it ends abruptly, and that was that.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Human weakness and strength

By Claes

Graham Bowley manages to put you 'on the scene'. Even a reader with no particular interest in climbing will be fascinated by the extraordinary attraction that mighty mountains can have on some people and of the human side of the dramatic events that took place on K2 August 2008. These are the two main achievements by the the author who remarkably does not have a background in mountaineering. Fortunately Bowley has researched the events behind the book well and he writes superbly.

You meet a number of individuals most of them passionate about advanced mountain climbing. The Sherpas climb and carry to make a living.

The agreed plan to coordinate the climb among the various teams soon falls apart as several of the climbers seem to lose their judgement climbing towards the peak. The concern about your fellow climbers melts away, among some climbers, into thin air in the demanding climb towards the top of K2. An example: In spite of all planning several climbers keep going although they know that they will arrive late in the day and that climbing down the mountain in darkness will be seriously dangerous. This will expose them, their teams and probably other climbers to life threatening danger. This is proof of some climbers' mindboggling passion for the ultimate climb.

Descending the mountain proves to be a disaster for several climbers. The story shines a clear light on the individual

climbers and their personalities and their (in some cases) extraordinary behaviour. Some acts of true heroism are

simply remarkable.

Bowley makes no strong judgement calls but leaves that to the reader. As a non mountain climber you may get the impression that some of the deaths could, perhaps, have been avoided. But then only those who survived would know.

This book is on par with 'Into thin Air'.

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