



Left for Dead: My Journey Home from Everest

By Dr. Seaborn Beck Weathers, Stephen G. Michaud

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On May 10, 1996, nine climbers perished in a blizzard high on Mount Everest, the single deadliest day ever on the peak. The following day, one of these victims was given a second chance. His name is Beck Weathers. The tale of Dr. Weathers's miraculous awakening from a deep hypothermic coma was widely reported. But the hidden story of what led the pathologist to Everest in the first place, and his painful recovery after his dramatic rescue, has not been told until now. Brilliant and gregarious, Weathers discovered in his thirties that mountain climbing helped him cope with the black dog of depression. But his self-prescribed therapy came at a steep cost: estrangement from his wife, Peach, and their two children. By the time he left for Everest, his home life had all but disintegrated. Yet when he was reported dead after lying exposed on the mountain for eighteen hours in subzero weather, it was Peach who orchestrated the daring rescue that brought her husband home. Only then, facing months of surgery and the loss of his hands, did Beck Weathers also begin to face himself, his family, his past, and his uncertain future. Candid and uncompromising, *Left for Dead* is a deeply compelling saga of crisis and change, and of the abiding power of love and family.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Left for Dead is a deeply personal story, told in first person by a variety of people who contributed to the survival of Beck Weathers during the Everest accident of 1996 that left nine climbers dead. It goes past the tragedy to discuss why Weathers got involved in climbing in the first place, his lengthy and painful recovery, and the all-important relationship with his wife, Margaret (commonly referred to as Peach). Without Peach's hope and tenacity, it's likely that rescue efforts would not have been continued, and Weathers may never have recovered from the hypothermic coma and its dreadful results. The story of their relationship--they were estranged at the time of the accident--is told from both perspectives, and his obsession with mountains seems almost like another family member. The overall tone is straightforward and conversational: children, pets, and clothing feature as prominently as reconstructive surgery and heroic rescues. But no matter how plainly they are told, the events of that climb are sure to bring tears. Rob Hall's last conversation with his wife, climbers disappearing into the storm, Anatoli Boukreev's rescuing three people, and Weathers and climbing partner Yasuko being left for dead are just a few from a long list. Still, you'll find yourself laughing just pages later, when Weathers gets his rescue team to sing "Chain of Fools" while hiking back to safety--you can imagine Peach being in full agreement of that song's appropriateness. The Everest deaths affected people around the world, and this chronicle of one survivor and his family is a hopeful reminder of the good that can result from such tragedies. --Jill Lightner

From Publishers Weekly

A survivor of the disastrous Mt. Everest expedition described in Jon Krakauer's bestseller *Into Thin Air*, Weathers is the climber many readers will remember from searing media photos of a man with heavily bandaged hands and a face so badly frostbitten it scarcely seemed human. In fact, Weathers had been abandoned by his fellow mountaineers as dead and spent some 18 hours on the mountain in subzero temperatures before miraculously regaining his senses and staggering into camp. Back in the U.S., Weathers, who is a physician, lost both hands and underwent extensive facial reconstruction. But there were other wounds to heal: he had neglected his family so much in pursuit of his hobby that his wife had decided to end the marriage once he returned. Co-written with Michaud (*The Evil That Men Do; The Only Living Witness*), this book deals in part with the climb but mainly with Weathers's life before and after the catastrophe. The man who wrote this book doesn't seem any less self-absorbed than the one who climbed Mt. Everest. In the years before the disaster, Weathers spent every spare moment pursuing his own interests as his wife and children became strangers to him. Now he claims to have rediscovered his family, but, unfortunately, the reader learns very little about them. Ultimately, this engrossing tale depicts the difficulty of a man's struggle to reform his life. Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. (Apr.)

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From Library Journal

When a blizzard trapped the author and dozens of other climbers near the summit of Mount Everest in 1996, much of the world closely followed the tragedy, in which nine died. Weathers, a Dallas-area pathologist who paid \$65,000 to climb the mountain, was given up for dead only to amaze everyone, himself included, when he survived the seemingly impossible conditions. The author begins this work with the tragedy on Everest, chronicled in Jon Krakauer's best-selling *Into Thin Air* (LJ 4/1/97) as well as David Breashears's *High Exposure* (LJ 6/1/99). He then spends the majority of the book examining his reasons for pushing himself to climb tall mountains and explaining how the experience has changed him and his family. A deeply moving account of a person coming to terms with his shortcomings and his response when given a second chance,

this book is highly recommended for all collections.

-DTim Markus, *Evergreen State Coll. Lib., Olympia, WA*

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