



Tigers of the Snow: How One Fateful Climb Made The Sherpas Mountaineering Legends

Jonathan Neale

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The true story of the tragedy and survival on one of the world's most dangerous mountains.

In 1922 Himalayan climbers were British gentlemen, and their Sherpa and Tibetan porters were "coolies," unskilled and inexperienced casual laborers. By 1953 Sherpa Tenzing Norgay stood on the summit of Everest, and the coolies had become the "Tigers of the Snow."

Jonathan Neale's absorbing new book is both a compelling history of the oft-forgotten heroes of mountaineering and a gripping account of the expedition that transformed the Sherpas into climbing legends. In 1934 a German-led team set off to climb the Himalayan peak of Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain on earth. After a disastrous assault in 1895, no attempt had been made to conquer the mountain for thirty-nine years. The new Nazi government was determined to prove German physical superiority to the rest of the world. A heavily funded expedition was under pressure to deliver results. Like all climbers of the time, they did not really understand what altitude did to the human body. When a hurricane hit the leading party just short of the summit, the strongest German climbers headed down and left the weaker Germans and the Sherpas to die on the ridge. What happened in the next few days of death and fear changed forever how the Sherpa climbers thought of themselves. From that point on, they knew they were the decent and responsible people of the mountain.

Jonathan Neale interviewed many old Sherpa men and women, including Ang Tsering, the last man off Nanga Parbat alive in 1934. Impeccably researched and superbly written, *Tigers of the Snow* is the compelling narrative of a climb gone wrong, set against the mountaineering history of the early twentieth century, the haunting background of German politics in the 1930s, and the hardship and passion of life in the Sherpa valleys.

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