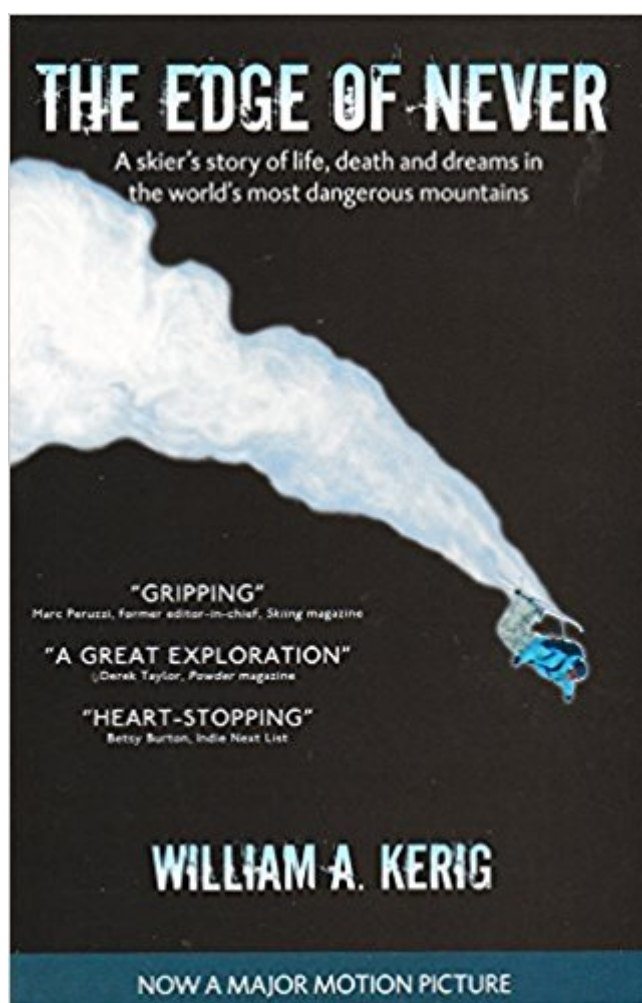


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The Edge Of Never: A Skier's Story Of Life, Death, And Dreams In The World's Most Dangerous Mountains



Synopsis

In the world of big-mountain skiing, Trevor Petersen was a legend. Appearing in countless films, magazines and photo shoots, his ponytail flying behind him, he was the very embodiment of the freewheeling spirit of extreme skiing in the 1980s and early 1990s. Then it all came to an end. On February 26, 1996, while skiing in Chamonix, France; the so-called Death Sport Capital of the World; an avalanche swept Trevor away. His body was found sitting up in the snow as if gazing at the mountains he loved. Nearly a decade later, Trevor's fifteen-year-old son, Kye Petersen, a rising star in his own right, traveled to Chamonix to ski the run that took his father's life and, with the aid of some of the world's greatest ski mountaineers, to become a member of skiing's big-mountain tribe. There to chronicle Kye's story was William A. Kerig, a filmmaker with a dream of his own; to create a film about the soul of big-mountain skiing and the band of mountaineers who ski the steepest, wildest, most dangerous terrain in the world. In *The Edge of Never*, Kerig gives us not only a ripping adventure tale about a young man coming of age but a frank and subtle portrait of the extreme skiers who "live big" in the face of death and risk everything to experience the fullness of life in the mountains.

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Customer Reviews

"[A] raging good read. The Edge of Never takes the reader beyond mountains, beyond snow and ice and danger, and into the heart of family." *Wasatch Journal* "A great exploration of the tragic and unforgiving nature of life in the mountains and its beautiful and sometimes irresistible allure." *Derek Taylor, editor, Powder magazine* "What Into Thin Air is to mountain

climbing, Kerig's *The Edge of Never* is to skiing." — Keith Carlsen, former editor, *Powder* magazine "A gripping tale of fathers, sons, and the mountains that call to them." — Marc Peruzzi, former editor-in-chief, *Skiing* magazine "An insider's look at a tribe of devoted — some would say fanatical — skiers in the mountains that are their lifeblood (and all too often the cause of their death)." — Peter Shelton, author, *Climb to Conquer*

William A. Kerig has been a professional skier for 10 years and has contributed to *Men's Health*, *Men's Journal*, *Powder* magazine, *Skiing* magazine, and *Snow Country*. He created and coproduced *Steep*, a feature documentary about big-mountain skiing; has hosted and produced television pieces for ESPN, Fox Sports, and the Weather Channel; and is the author of *The Snowboarder's Guide to Life* and *Utah Underground*. He lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

I always wanted to read about the details of Trevor Peterson's death. I have several old videos starring Trevor and was shocked when he died. William Kerig's writing style made for an interesting read and having skied in Chamonix this book brought back good memories of Cham.

I appreciate that a lot of people like this book a lot. I can't argue with the fact that it is heartfelt and that Bill Kerig is both honest and writing from a vulnerable perspective (he is honest about his own travails and difficulties and how they play into the story). But the bottom line in all of this is that after reading the book and listening to the protagonists explain why they did what they did, I can't help but to conclude that at its core, this book is about the adults and their manipulation (for lack of a better word) of a kid, Kye Petersen, for what's in the end their own good rather than his. It's complicated for sure, but it's hard to run away from the unsettling thought that this is sad story about adults exploiting a teenager and running their own agendas under the guise of doing "what's best for him." The book made me cringe, and I felt "dirty" reading it. I have lived in the world of which the authors write (albeit not necessarily at their level of it). I have skied and played with people who were hard-core "extreme" skier types (I hate that word, but it does successfully connote something), and with them I have done backcountry skiing, hiking, climbing, etc., although I would never claim to be "the real deal" in this regard (although some of my friends were). But I'm also not some armchair weekend warrior. What bothered me about this story is that it feels like a form of "pimping" by adults who are bringing "new fresh meat" into "the business" as an excuse for a project that is ultimately intended for their own benefit. Perhaps the "new fresh meat" would have followed that pathway anyway, but it felt like adults were making decisions for the kid while passing it off as "his decisions"

and "his own free will." I think not. Regardless, I appreciate that a lot of other people will have a different reaction to this than I did. But for me, I think that at its core, this is a story about exploitation that's instead passed off as a story about altruism.

Great book if you are into Skiing. I can't wait to see the DVD.

The perfect book for any avid skier you may know. It's the kind of book that you can't put down once you start reading!

I'm an avid skier, and found the technical aspects about ski mountaineering to be quite interesting. However, as a story, I found this book ordinary. The writing seems to be on the sixth grade level, and I don't buy for a minute the notion about this being a story that needs to be told. To me, this was not the story of a boy's rite of passage into manhood (or whatever I was supposed to get out of it). To me it was the story of some guys who like to ski who wanted to make a ski movie. The supposed subplot -- about the "tribe" of extreme skiers taking care of their own, etc., is uninspiring at best and egotistical at worst. Their behavior seems typical for any group of folks that does something dangerous. The same story has been told a thousand times with firemen, policemen, soldiers, teachers and nurses. What's different is that these skiers do this for themselves and their own bragging rights, not to help others. So if we're supposed to hold extreme skiers in higher regard, I am unconvinced. Giving it three stars because I do think the technical ski-mountaineering part was well done. This would have been a great article in a magazine, but I don't think it needed to be a book (or movie).

Bill Kerig made his bones as a skier competing for ten years on the World Pro Mogul Tour. After retiring in 1996, he began building his reputation as a writer and film producer/director, married an understanding woman, and started a family, which led him to mastermind the extraordinary adventure he relates in this remarkable book. Kerig takes us inside the world of big mountain skiing with a group of skiers who arguably invented the sport, with a story within a story within a story. In the center is the legendary Trevor Petersen, who was killed at the height of his prowess in the prime of his life in an avalanche at Chamonix in 1996; that story is encapsulated by the coming of age journey his son Kye makes to Chamonix in 2005 to ski the run where his father died; and surrounding both stories is another equally compelling one about Bill Kerig's personal quest to make a movie that will enable skiers and nonskiers alike "see what it is that makes this mountain life so

special that people are willing to die in order to live it. I wanted to see selflessness, the loyalty of family, tradition and respect. I wanted to see men risk their lives to help a boy become a man--a better man than themselves, perhaps."It is rare for me to read a book start to finish in one day, especially one with the girth of *The Edge of Never*, but that's how it was. Combining astute observation and a penetrating, journalistic style of writing, Kerig puts the reader on that trip to Chamonix with the 110-pound twin-tip riding lost boy who earns his birthright by experiencing his father's last run firsthand--with the able assistance of his dad's good friends Glen Flake and Mike Hattrup, private instruction from the man who wrote the book on ski mountaineering routes around Chamonix, Anselme Baud, and the unwavering leadership of a chain-smoking French guide called Fanfan, who later nearly dies in a "stupid" fall while filming background shots for the movie.

Kye Petersen was a rising fifteen year old professional skier in 2004 when Bill Kerig proposed that he retrace his father's last run down the Glacier Rond at Chamonix as the premise of a documentary that would seek an answer to why guys like Trevor Petersen would risk life and limb to ski the most treacherous mountains in the world. The very proposition, even though Kye is acknowledged as one of the best fifteen year old skiers in the world, is so crazy Kerig marvels that Tanya Petersen would ever allow her son to do it. Crazy is the word Kye chooses to describe the experience after he does it: "This is the craziest feeling ever. The satisfaction, the one hundred percent satisfaction from the long mission! I've never done anything that took that long to ski. That much effort. This is really, really cool. And suuuper scary. I don't know what kind of words to use, really. The no-fall zones--serious no-fall zones--it's like nothing I've ever done before. Gave me a really crazy feeling of adrenaline. I always wanted to ski this place. To see what my father saw, where he went. Now I've been there. I know now. This is the best feeling, the craziest feeling in the whole world!"

Chamonix is known as "the Death Sport Capital of the World" because an average of sixty people die on its slopes every year. We learn that Anselme Baud's son died just the year before, skiing a route that Anselme had pioneered with Patrick Vallencant almost twenty years before. We meet Doug Coombs on the Aiguille du Midi the day Kye skies the Glacier Rond. A year later, Coombs died in an attempt to save a friend who fell off a cliff while skiing together at La Grave, just down the road from Chamonix. Kerig is inspired to take the risk of doing this project when his mother dies unexpectedly. Then when Peter Jennings, whose company owned the rights to Kerig's movie and was underwriting the film project, dies of lung cancer soon after the crew returns home, the project is sidelined in favor of a documentary about Doug Coombs called "Steep," which came out last year.

Although death plays a prominent role in *The Edge of Never*, the reader gains an understanding of life, and how the men and women who play those stakes do it not because they

love death but because they love life and won't let the fear overcome their faith. Kerig writes early in the book, in the chapter called A Madman's Scheme about coming up with the concept for the film, a passage that perfectly explains why Trevor would do it, and why Kye (and Bill) would too. "...as a skier I know that taking control requires moving toward the thing you most fear. On very steep terrain, everything in your being screams, Back off! Get away from the edge! But you learn to ignore those voices and move toward the emptiness because if you lean away from the void and into the slope, your ski bases tilt and you lose your edge--the only thing holding you to the hill. Lose your edge at the wrong moment, and it could be the last thing you ever do. Control comes from squaring your shoulders, reaching out and planting your pole down the hill, and moving with complete conviction toward the abyss. It's a thrilling, counterintuitive, high-stakes dance, and it's become my one enduring faith." Bill Kerig was able to buy the rights to all the film footage described in the book. He expects to release the film he intended to make in Chamonix about Kye and Trevor Peterson in the fall of 2009. It too will be called The Edge of Never.

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