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The Edge of Never by William Kerig //ISBN: 0-9656338-4-5

William Kerig was a man in need of a story to tell and reality conspired to drop him into the middle of a perfect storm of stories. Drawing on his own years as a professional skier, he focused on one particular story in the classic form of a father and son, united by their love of the same profession, but divided by disaster.

Trevor Peterson, well known to ski magazine readers for his big mountain work and to film enthusiasts as one of the flying gods of ski films, had died, unwitnessed, in an avalanche. It was an untold story, beyond the level of journalistic reporting, a few inches of column space. The son that Trevor had left behind, Kye Peterson, had a father sized hole in his heart and too many unanswered questions.

Kerig knew that there was a story there, but he did not know just how many stories. It turns out that many of the professionals with whom Trevor had skied were still dealing with their own questions. On the one hand the disaster could have been any one of them and on the other hand they had to continue behaving as if there was no possibility of an end. There is the story of the great lion of screen journalism, Peter Jennings approaching the end of his career, unknown to those around him, and how he pushed them, challenged them both to know themselves better and to throw themselves completely into their work.

There is the story of 'family' united by their ordeals and profession rather than by blood, and there is the story of how risk can bring the precious blossoming of life to the forefront of one's attention?an insight largely lost in a world

that has made itself into a manicured theme-park, where safety rules: uber alles.

Kerig has captured a dozen other cords of stories that weave among the big one and add the texture and light, the crispness and depth that make this a sure-to-be-recommended book for adventure lovers and those who look for genuine human stories as well. (Although the large setting of Chamonix in the Alps is not a trivial one in its own right.)

The technical details of the skiing that Kye and Trevor's friends enact are instructive and white-knuckle, yet the rite of passage for Kye and the initiation by his father's generation gives continuity that says this is not just 'guys playing in the hills.' This, skiing, is now a profession, just like any other. People make their livings this way.

The final story, that flows naturally through and doesn't call undue attention to itself is the one of Kerig himself. A man, dissatisfied, and not entirely sure of where he is going, finds in the telling of tales about others, that he develops into a careful observer capable of balance and fine distinction, able to celebrate a richness of life that he did not show at the beginning of the tale.

I truly do look forward to what he pens next, but in the meantime I will re-read the Edge of Never.

—Mark Lehnertz
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