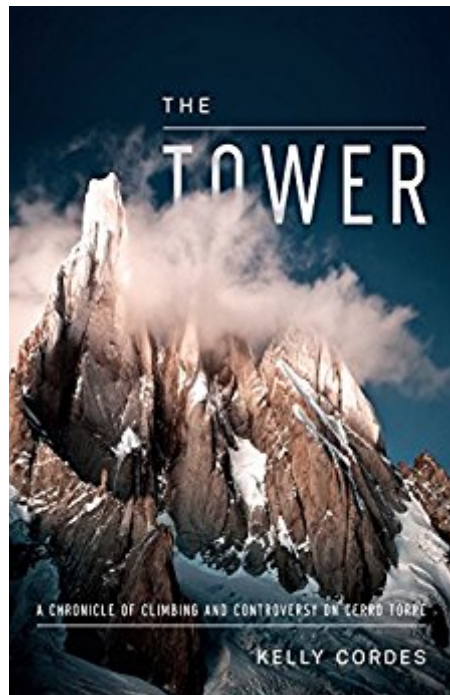




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The Tower: A Chronicle Of Climbing And Controversy On Cerro Torre



Synopsis

Patagonia's Cerro Torre, considered by many the most beautiful peak in the world, draws the finest and most devoted technical alpinists to its climbing challenges. But controversy has swirled around this ice-capped peak since Cesare Maestri claimed first ascent in 1959. Since then a debate has raged, with world-class climbers attempting to retrace his route but finding only contradictions. This chronicle of hubris, heroism, controversies and epic journeys offers a glimpse into the human condition, and why some pursue extreme endeavors that at face value have no worth.

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Customer Reviews

The Tower is a gripping, thorough, well-researched and well-written history of attempts on the world's hardest mountain, lavishly illustrated. I recommend buying the hardback rather than the Kindle version; the bigger photos look better, and you'll want to keep flipping back to the route topos. The photos of rime tunnels are jaw-dropping. I like the narrative style, which jumps around a bit to give you more familiarity with specific routes or other themes rather than following a strict chronology. One very minor complaint: The bolt traverse on the Compressor route plays an important role in the story, but none of the many photos explicitly show this feature. One somewhat

bigger complaint: I got a little tired of the Maestri-bashing, particularly with repeated variations of the phrase, "until Maestri came along with his compressor." Kelly Cordes obviously thinks the compressor was a bad idea, but this becomes clear from the journalism without the need for sarcasm. Furthermore, Maestri is double-damned for lying about his first ascent and clinging to the notion that to question his word is to question the entire history of mountaineering. Cordes admirably covers the topic of standard of proof. Still, it would have been nice to hear more good things about Maestri. Did he really do over a thousand first ascents? Apart from national pride, is there a good reason why some people are so fanatically loyal to him? Too bad Walter Bonatti didn't get the benefit of some of that national pride. My hardback accidentally included repeats of the first 20 pages of color photos after the index, so I cut some out and stuck them on the wall. Very inspiring.

This is a great book! Actually, one might say several books in one. The magnificent photography alone may be worth the price of admission. For those of us that might not venture to Patagonia, it's a great armchair adventure and photo tour. The tale of the unlikely and outrageous (but absolutely true) tale of the "compression route" is a worthy tale in its own right. The detailed climbing history of "The Tower" is to walk with legends of climbing of the last several decades. And lastly, in this era of Lance Armstrong, A-Rod and deflategate; an informed study of the ethos and ethics of climbing and its own efforts to deal with those sometimes sticky components is at the minimum, stimulating and thought provoking. I nearly read it in one sitting. I have to go, I am going to re-read it right now. Saludos Kelly Cordes, well done!

This was a story I didn't know about prior to reading this book. The story kept my attention, and I learned some things about alpine climbing. The terminology is heavily geared towards a reader with knowledge of the alpine climbing world, and required a bit of research on my part to understand what all the new (to me) terminology meant. The story got a little slow at points, but for the most part was a good read. If you like adventure stories, this is a good book even if you have little to no background in alpine climbing.

I had a difficult time putting the book down. There is much to appreciate and learn from the climbs shared. While the truths of some situations written about may never be fully known, Cordes does justice to the people involved, laying the evidence and contradictions bare. I know in my limited experience as an Andenista, when the air is thin, the day is long, and the weather is bad, how reality

can become distorted. Cordes does well incorporating human elements and a reasonable benefit of doubt into the presentation of his research. Thanks for the inspiration Mr. Cordes.

The Tower is...phenomenal. It is well researched and accessible for the climber and non-climber alike. Kelly Cordes did a great job of providing all the details one would want, and he artfully weaves into the narrative stories of other ascents of Cerro Torre, climbing epics, controversy, and indirectly some of the cultural implications of our desire to explore and conquer unknown places. I have to admit that many books in the mountaineering genre are not all that well written - this book is a clear exception. It stands on its own as a historical piece, but it is so much more than that. The Tower is simply outstanding work.

Excellent read! I love the passion for the story that Cordes displays throughout. The time and research that went into the telling of this story are apparent and I appreciate it. I can't wait to see what Cordes turns to next, I'm sure it will be fantastic.

This book was recommended by my climbing partner and I had no knowledge of the mountain or its controversial history before I read it. The author follows a chronological path to tell the story which makes it a bit choppy, but also helps keep a logical flow. The descriptions of the people, places, and events are well done. As a climber and mountaineer, I think this is a must read because it utilizes a historic event to challenge climbing ethics.

For climbers, historians, trekkers and mountain lovers this is a great read. Cordes presents more evidence to deny Maestri's 1959 climb that has not been previously covered in any of Garibotti's or Messner's analyses. But Cordes does not stop at the Maestri controversy, but describes the "modern" controversies of Cerro Torre as well, from the removal of Maestri's bolts, to David Lama's free climb of the compressor route.

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