



Just for the love of it

Cathy O'Dowd

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At 8am on 29 May 1999, Cathy O'Dowd, a 30-year-old mountaineer from South Africa, stepped onto the summit of Everest and into history. She had become the first woman to climb the highest mountain in the world from both its south (Edmund Hillary) and north (George Mallory) sides. To achieve this, Cathy has had to face the ultimate risks of Everest.

During her first ascent from the south in 1996, she and her team were trapped in the killer storm described in Jon Krakauer's best seller *Into Thin Air*. They finally reached the summit, only to have the thrill of success snatched away when a team member disappeared on the descent. In 1998 Cathy, attempting the north side of Everest, stopped only a few hundred metres from the summit to try and help a dying American climber. The woman's first words were 'don't leave me'. Yet Cathy eventually had to leave her to save her own life.

Now Cathy has captured the drama of her Everest climbs, her passion for the challenge of climbing mountains and her love for wild places in this story of her four attempts on the mountain. Cathy tries to answer the question of why, if climbing Everest can be so dangerous, people still want to do it.

In a new chapter, Cathy shares the previously untold story of her fourth Everest expedition, an attempt to climb a new route on the seldom visited and very risky east face of Everest. Storms, avalanches and crevasses all contributed to an expedition fraught with difficulty.

This is a book of challenge, of adventure, of love and life and death. This is Everest, the world's highest mountain, climbed 'just for the love of it'.

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