



AAC Publications

The Bold and Cold: A History of 25 Classic Climbs in the Canadian Rockies

By Brandon Pullan

The Bold and Cold: A History of 25 Classic Climbs in the Canadian Rockies. Brandon Pullan. Rocky Mountain Books (Canada), 2016. Hardcover, 264 pages, \$45.

The *Bold and Cold* is not a guidebook, nor a picture book, but it is essential reading and dreaming. In place on the shelf of old climbing magazines, where collectively is a repository scattered like gems amid choss, *The Bold and Cold* brings together an accounting of the Canadian Rockies in a manner that reveals a bright cord of courage, inspiration, and friendships running through the decades and stringing together the selected routes.

Pullan “inherited” this project from Urs Kallen, a longtime Rockies climber who compiled the original notes and list, and it runs from the CMC Wall on Yamnuska to the legendary north face of North Twin. This is not just the stories of the hard first ascents in the wilds of the Great White North, but a look at how these routes pushed standards and inspired those who would return to these same routes to measure themselves. As scoured rock can reveal the progress of a great glacier, so do these icy corners show how the epitome of the ideal has been advanced.

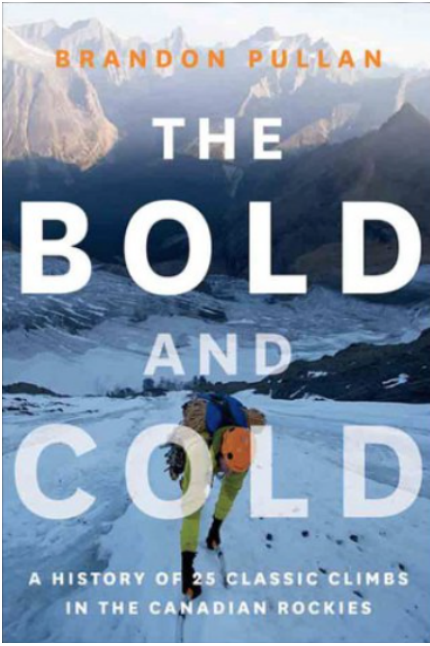
The overall experience of reading *The Bold and Cold* is of sitting around a low but hot campfire, surrounded by the cold night, hunched close, where the enthusiastic and awed voice of Pullan paints the mountains in your imagination. At each heavy pause he reclines into the circle of darkness while a different face leans in—the firelight throwing shadows upward on the lines that crease their life maps of determination and inner struggle—and another of the great climbers comes into the light, briefly, to tell a small part of the overall act. This method is mesmerizing. This is not an *accounting* as in history; this is a *necessity* as in war story. And Pullan is the consummate host: never hogging the stage, merely facilitating others to tell the tale with their own humor and humanity.

Most of these routes may remain out of reach of the average mountaineer, but the tales of their creation are the cave paintings and fire chants of our tribe, and their essence echoes far from their originating stone. And that is their true strength: to be the legends that are heard above the fear, for who could not be inspired when faltering on a lesser route to compare their own situation to the desperate commitment at the crux of a huge route such as the Wild Thing on Mt. Chephren?

This is a book that you carry within you and will return to, yet again, to run a calloused fingertip down the smooth words and try to find purchase on that elusive courage.

– Jerry Auld

Images



Article Details

Author	Jerry Auld
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	360
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Book reviews