

# [PDF] Into The Silence: The Great War, Mallory, And The Conquest Of Everest

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**Books Details:**

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Author: Wade Davis

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## **Description:**

: It's tempting to call 's magnificent Into the Silence an Everest of a book. But that would be misleading. It is more like K2: challenging, technically complex, and hugely rewarding upon completion. The book starts off not with mountaineering, but with vivid, novelistic descriptions of the horrors of the First World War. Years of waste and destruction in the trenches, Davis argues, "led a desperate nation to embrace the assault on Everest as a gesture of imperial redemption." Those who endured attempts on the summit all bore the scars of the Great War—and they were drawn to the mountain by an almost contradictory desire for conquest and spiritual ablution. At the center of it all is Mallory, whose eventual disappearance effectively closed that chapter in mountaineering. His utterance "because it's there" became a new war cry, but he climbed for

deeper reasons entirely. -- Chris Schluiep

## Review

"Davis's book, ten years in the writing, is highly absorbing narrative . . . A heroic attempt to capture the scale of the undertaking to conquer the highest mountain on earth."

—Michael Jeffries, *The Newark Star-Ledger*

"A magnificent, audacious venture . . . *Into the Silence* is quite unlike any other mountaineering book. It not only spins a gripping Boy's Own yarn about the early British expeditions to Everest, but investigates how the carnage of the trenches bled into a desire for redemption at the top of the world. Many of those Himalayan explorers, including Mallory, had served in the corpse-ridden fields of northern France. Indeed, of the 26 men who climbed in the three expeditions, 20 had seen front-line action. Six had been severely wounded, two others hospitalized by disease at the front, and one treated for shell shock. All had seen dozens of friends and countrymen die. For these veterans, the author argues, death had lost its power . . . At its heart, *Into the Silence* is an elegy for a lost generation."

—Ed Caesar, *The Sunday Times* (Front cover)

"A gripper of a read . . . *Silence* revives the cliff's-edge drama of those Jazz age climbs and drives home the tragedy of Mallory's death."

—Bruce Barcott, *Outside*

"The men in this story had, for the most part, been young in 1914, bright and energetic and full of dreams. By 1918 those who had survived had seen and done things that no one should have to know about, and Davis does a magnificent job detailing their experiences, setting up the rest of the story—the expeditionary saga—as a logical response, even an inspired rejoinder to the soul-destroying realities of war. . . it is perhaps the book's signature achievement that [Davis] keeps the narrative zipping along toward its inexorable and tragic conclusion while so thoroughly and persuasively contextualizing key events."

—Christina Thompson, *The Boston Globe*

"This profoundly ambitious book aims high itself, because it sets the subject of Everest in a specific historical context . . . . Davis's monumental work ranges . . . widely through the matter of Everest, both on and off the mountain, with harrowing descriptions of life and death on the Western Front, with frank dissections of rivalries, motives, inadequacies and confusions, and measured character studies."

—Jan Morris, *The Telegraph*

"A meticulous recreation . . . The death in 1912 of Captain Scott and his companions in the Antarctic set a precedent of sacrifice for the generation of young British men who, a few years later, would hurl themselves into the maelstrom of the Great War. That Scott's expedition was, according to later accounts, doomed by incompetent leadership only makes its failure seem more prophetic. Now, in Wade Davis's magnificent new book, the remaining goal of imperial exploration is seen as an outcome of—and response to—the First World War. While Scott's expedition was, in some ways, an exercise in heroic futility, the conquest of Mount Everest could help to exorcise the massed ghosts of the dead."

—Geoff Dyer, *The Guardian*

"[A] meticulous history . . . Culminating in detailed accounts of the ascents that astutely weigh events and controversies, this vital contribution to Everest literature should rivet readers."

—Gilbert Taylor, *Booklist*

“The First World War, the worst calamity humanity has ever inflicted on itself, still reverberates in our lives. In its immediate aftermath, a few young men who had fought in it went looking for a healing challenge, and found it far from the Western Front. In recreating their astonishing adventure, Wade Davis has given us an elegant meditation on the courage to carry on.”

—George F. Will

“I was captivated. Wade Davis has penned an exceptional book on an extraordinary generation. They do not make them like that anymore. And there would always only ever be one Mallory. From the pathos of the trenches to the inevitable tragedies high on Everest this is a book deserving of awards. Monumental in its scope and conception it nevertheless remains hypnotically fascinating throughout. A wonderful story tinged with sadness.”

—Joe Simpson, author of *Touching the Void*

“*Into the Silence* is utterly fascinating, and grippingly well-written. With extraordinary skill Wade Davis manages to weave together such disparate strands as Queen Victoria’s Indian Raj, the ‘Great Game’ of intrigue against Russia, the horrors of the Somme, and Britain’s obsession to conquer the world’s highest peak, all linking to that terrible moment atop Everest when Mallory fell to his death. The mystery of whether he and Irving ever reached the summit remains tantalizingly unsolved.”

—Alistair Horne, author of *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*

“*Into the Silence* is a breathtaking triumph. An astonishing piece of research, it is also intensely moving, evoking the courage, chivalry, and sacrifice that drove Mallory and his companions through the war and to ever greater heights.”

—William Shawcross, author of *The Queen Mother*

“Wade Davis’s mesmerizing telling of George Mallory’s fabled story gives new and revealing weight to the significance of this post-war era and to his dazzlingly accomplished and courageous companions. *Into the Silence* succeeds not only because Davis’s research is prodigious, but because every sentence has been struck with conviction, every image evoked with fierce reverence—for the heartbreaking twilight era, for the magnificent resilience of its survivors, for their mission, for Mallory, for his mountain. An epic worth of its epic.”

—Caroline Alexander, author of *The Endurance* and *The War That Killed Achilles*

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