



# The Beckoning Silence

*Joe Simpson*

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*"I had to stand there and watch while the rest of my life was determined by the shaky adhesion of a few millimetres of fractured ice and the dubious friction of a tiny point of metal in a hairline crack in a rock wall..."*

Marking the climax of his climbing career, Joe Simpson confronts his fears and mountaineering history in an assault on the North Face of the Eiger. Since his epic battle for survival in the Andes, recounted in *Touching the Void*, Joe Simpson has experienced a life filled with adventure but marred by death. He has endured the painful attrition of climbing friends in accidents which call into question the perilously exhilarating activity to which he has devoted his whole life. Probability is inexorably closing in. The tragic loss of a close friend forces a momentous decision. It is time to turn his back on the mountains that he has loved. Never more alive than when most at risk, he has come to see a last climb on the mile-high North Face of the Eiger as the cathartic finale to his climbing career.

In a narrative that takes the reader through extreme experiences from an avalanche in Bolivia, ice-climbing in the Alps and Colorado and paragliding in Spain -- before his final confrontation with the Eiger -- Simpson reveals the inner truth of climbing, exploring the power of the mind and the frailties of the body through intensely lived accounts of exhilaration and despair. The subject of his new book is the siren song of fear and his struggle to come to terms with it.

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