



## Fall of the Phantom Lord: Climbing and the Face of Fear

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In 1989, while attempting a new route on a difficult overhanging rock face, climber Dan Osman fell. Again and again, protected by the rope, he fell. He decided then that it would not be in climbing but in falling that he would embrace his fear--bathe in it, as he says, and move beyond it.

A captivating exploration of the daredevil world of rock climbing, as well as a thoughtful meditation on the role of risk and fear in the author's own life.

In the tradition of the wildly popular man-versus-nature genre that has launched several bestsellers, Andrew Todhunter follows the lives of world-class climber Dan Osman and his coterie of friends as he explores the extremes of risk on the unyielding surface of the rock.

Climbing sheer rock faces of hundreds or thousands of feet is more a religion than a sport, demanding dedication, patience, mental and physical strength, grace, and a kind of obsession with detail that is crucial just to survive. Its artists are modern-day ascetics who often sacrifice nine-to-five jobs, material goods, and the safety of everyday life to pit themselves and their moral resoluteness against an utterly unforgiving opponent.

In the course of the two years chronicled in *Fall of the Phantom Lord*, the author also undertakes a journey of his own as he begins to weigh the relative value of extreme sports and the risk of sudden death. By the end of the book, as he ponders joining Osman on a dangerous fall from a high bridge to feel what Osman experiences, Todhunter comes to a new understanding of risk taking and the role it has in his life, and in the lives of these climbers.

Beautifully written, *Fall of the Phantom Lord* offers a fascinating look at a world few people know. It will surely take its place alongside *Into Thin Air* and *The Perfect Storm* as a classic of adventure literature.

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