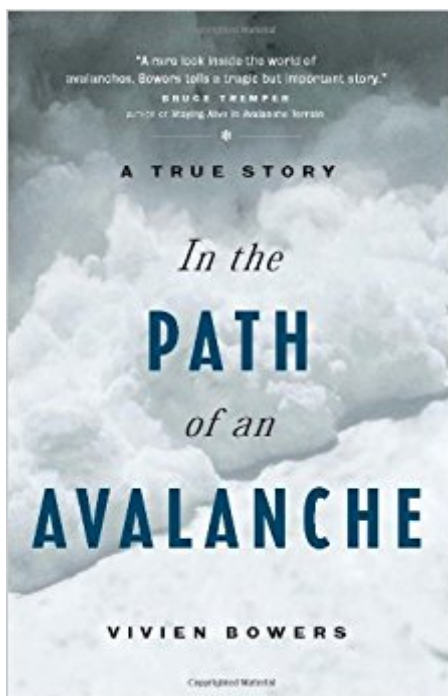


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In The Path Of An Avalanche: A True Story



Synopsis

On a clear, cold morning in January 1998, in the Selkirk Mountains of southeastern British Columbia, a massive avalanche buried six experienced back-country skiers. They didn't have a chance. Thus began the worst day for avalanche deaths in Canadian history and one of the most tragic in North America. This book is the biography of a deadly avalanche, detailing how a combination of factors—steep, open terrain, an unstable winter snow pack primed to slide, aggravating weather conditions, and a trigger provided by a handful of back-country skiers—resulted in human tragedy. It is the story of a particular avalanche, but it illustrates a natural phenomenon that has threatened human endeavours throughout the world since people first ventured within the reach of steep snow slopes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On January 2, 1998, in British Columbia's Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park, six backcountry skiers were buried beneath a massive avalanche in the Selkirk Mountains. What led these experienced skiers to place themselves in harm's way? Bowers, a British Columbia resident, searches for answers in this gripping chronicle, exploring both the history and hazards of skiing as she examines events that led to the tragedy. A backcountry skier herself, Bowers has contributed to such publications as Canadian Geographic and Ski Canada, and she successfully intertwines technical information on avalanches with a suspenseful narrative. Opening with a description of the area (where Steve Martin filmed Roxanne), she notes the increase in fatalities that have accompanied the boom in backcountry winter recreation: skiing, ski mountaineering, snowmobiling and

snowboarding. Dangers lurk beneath the ice and snow: "Despite decades of research and the application of some very sophisticated technology, avalanches are still somewhat of an enigma." Outlining the difficulties of avalanche prediction, she details current efforts to prevent deaths and shares a mock rescue scenario. Setting the scene, she reviews the poor snow stability, weather conditions and other factors as they existed on the slopes in December 1997: "The snow was engaged in a silent tug-of-war with the forces of gravity.... In theory, even one snowflake could tip the scale." A mountain map aids in visualizing the landscape as Bowers's vivid descriptive prose captures the full fury of the avalanche and the sad aftermath. Nonskiers will learn much from this book, as will risk takers. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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