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Posted on 05 September 2018 By Stephen Venables

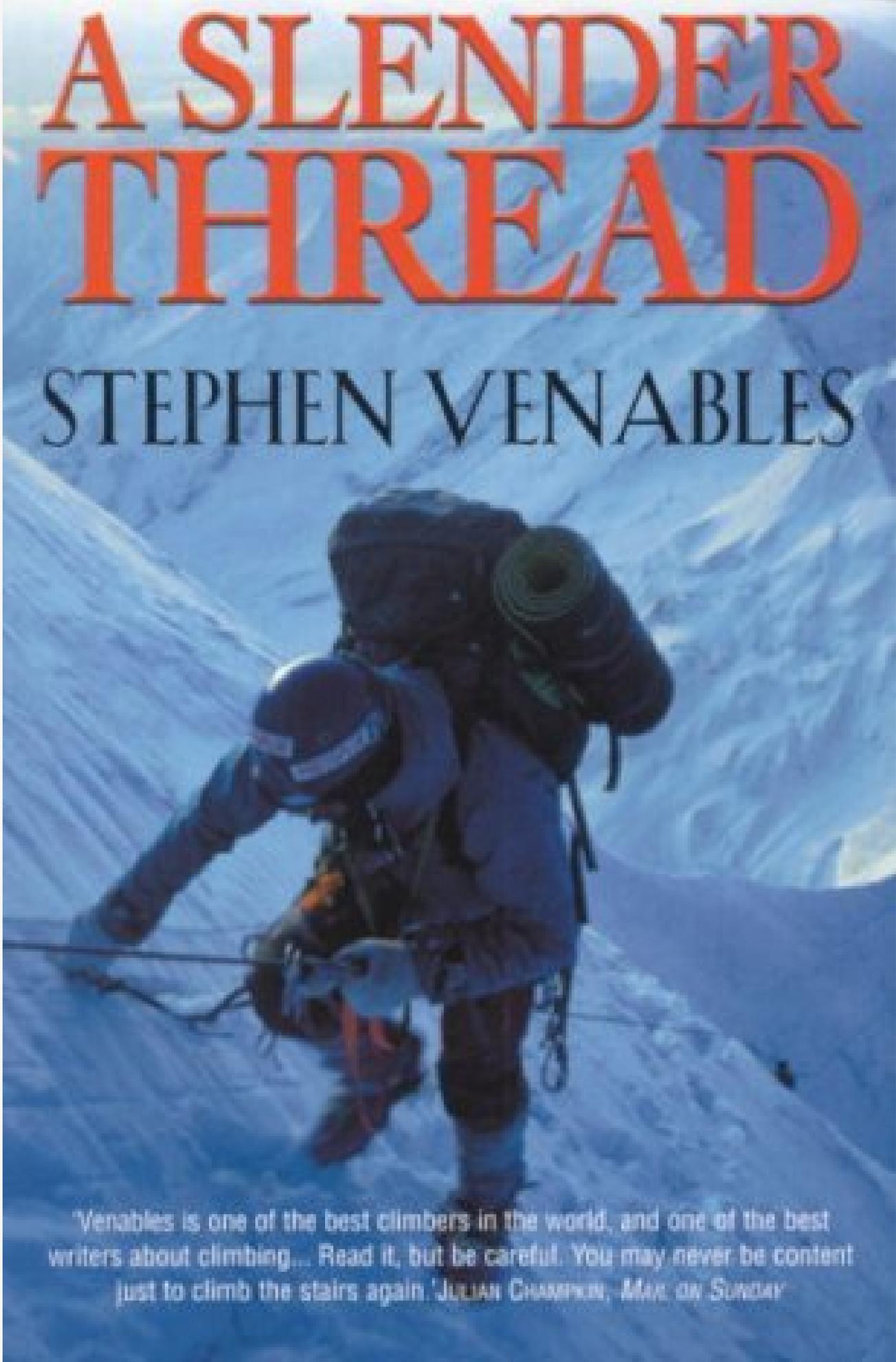
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[[Download Kindle]] Ø A Slender Thread: Escaping Disaster in the Himalaya Ì Together With Chris Bonington And Other Distinguished British Climbers, Stephen Venables Was High On The Unclimbed And Sacred Mountain Of Panch Chuli When, At Am On A Dark Himalayan Night, His Abseil Failed And He Fell Catastrophically, Somersaulting From Rock To Rock And Landing, Seriously Wounded, At The End Of A Rope Suspended Above A Degree Icefield This Is The Story Of His Arduous And Almost Miraculous Survival, And Of The Brilliant, Committed Teamwork Which Brought Him To Safety

A SLENDER THREAD

STEPHEN VENABLES



'Venables is one of the best climbers in the world, and one of the best writers about climbing... Read it, but be careful. You may never be content just to climb the stairs again.' JULIAN CHAMBERLAIN, *Mail on Sunday*

I went ahead and read the book in one sitting in spite of what some reviewers here noted I had to agree that it was somewhat dull. The premise was promising but the unraveling of events and storytelling was insipid and unexciting. Either the editor who wrote the prologue was exaggerating or baiting when he said the book belongs to the mantle of such incredible company such as Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air*, et al. Nothing could be farther than this. Maybe it was the author's self-admitted difficult personality that made the storytelling bland. Imagine, instead of being grateful for the ever-patient wife for helping the author ease back into everyday life with broken legs, he was sulking for her not assembling a neighborhood welcoming party. I'm into the outdoors and mountaineering myself and I was not illuminated with even an iota of why puny men rise to the challenge of monstrous mountains in this novel. There were a slew of names dropped that will fly over the heads of non-mountaineers as well as anecdotes that were superfluous and added nothing to the narrative. A wasted opportunity if you ask me. If it were possible to grade this half a star, I would have done so. I am surprised that Stephen Venables is able to make a living as a mountaineer writer if *A Slender Thread*. Escaping disaster in the Himalaya is a good example of his work. I just really didn't like his writing style, which made what should be a compelling and interesting story terribly boring. I couldn't get through this book, so maybe it improved by the time it got to the latter half. Venables' book is mostly about a giant fall he took while climbing in the Himalaya. I just put this book down a few hours ago and I honestly can't even remember where this fall took place. Panch Chuli, maybe. He talks about a gazillion other climbs along the way and is a huge name-dropper. This is a book that will appeal to someone who dwells in climbing circles, I think, but not to an armchair adventurer. I've read a lot of excellent books by mountaineers who also happened to be talented writers, and this book just really paled in comparison. This shows both how quickly disaster can occur and then how a situation can reverse from disaster to rescue when the odds appear insurmountable, basically depending on the skill of a helicopter pilot. I suppose I'm seeking some explanation as to why people want to climb and in such isolated areas I've come to the conclusion it isn't really explicable, though the concept of flow when doing something well against the consequences of a mistake are probably central drivers. However, it doesn't feel like it is actually about the risk. Well-written and you get a real sense of the fine balance between success and disaster.

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