

The Duke of the Abruzzi: An Explorer's Life. Mirella Tenderini and Michael Shandrick. The Mountaineers: Seattle, 1997. 216 pages. \$24.95.

Climbers of any age or experience level will treasure the biography of explorer and alpinist Luigi Amedeo di Savoia, *The Duke of the Abruzzi: An Explorer's Life*. Authors Mirella Tenderini and Michael Shandrick have crafted an excellent book that lends insight into an extraordinary man and member of the Italian royal family. Famous among the climbing set for his ascent of Mount Saint Elias and attempt on K2, the Duke was not only a mountaineer but also a polar explorer, war hero and ambassador of good will.

First impressions might lead one to believe that the Duke was a golden child with spoils to travel the world. Tenderini and Shandrick provide us with information to the contrary. A victim of family jealousy and political infighting, the Duke spent much of his life avoiding scrutiny of the press. The story of his failed relationship with a wealthy American heiress is included because it was the source of much worldwide media attention. Much more than a dry expedition account, this biography sheds light on the personal life of a guarded and enigmatic man.

Walter Bonatti pays tribute to the Duke in a heartfelt foreword. The book is organized chronologically into chapters about each of the major periods of the Duke's life. It is clear that an exhaustive amount of research has gone into this book. At times, facts such as names and dates are overwhelming, but this only adds to the book's value as a reference tool. Much attention is given to the Duke's expedition companions, such as famed photographer Vittorio Sella, dedicated assistant and scribe Filippo De Filippi, and many loyal guides who helped him realize his goals. Many black-and-white photographs, some by Sella, are included, which give a face to the legend.

In his foreword, Bonatti writes: "I have but one regret with regard to the Duke of the Abruzzi: to have not lived in his time." After the last page of this book has been turned and the cover closed, readers also will dream of joining the Duke on a foray to an unexplored range or following in his steps to a virgin summit. This book deserves a place in your library.

LEN ZANNI

Against the Wall. Simon Yates. Jonathan Cape: London, 1997. Distributed in the U.S. by Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, Vermont. Color photographs. 176 pages. \$35.00.

Okay, let's get this over with: Simon Yates is the guy who cut the rope on Joe Simpson in the Andes. He doesn't mention it until the last chapter of this book, but his publisher, who is also Simpson's, spreads it all over the dust jacket. The back flap even includes a blurb for Simpson's *Touching the Void*, which is ten years old. It may be true, as a prominent bookseller says in his catalogue, that "Yates will be forever known as the man who cut the rope." Few recall Ralph Branca's rookie year, when he won 21 games and started the World Series for the Dodgers, but almost everybody remembers that one bad pitch to Bobby Thomson. Yates's critics should reread *Touching the Void*. They might ask themselves what they would have done in Yates's place, and consider whether either Yates or Simpson would have been better off had the rope remained intact.

Now to *Against the Wall*. It describes a fine new route on the 4,000-foot vertical granite of the Central Tower of Paine. The four-man team faced major technical difficulties, as well as Patagonia's notorious wind and storm. Much aid was used (though few bolts), and some 3,000 feet of line were fixed. Many of the ropes were jumared repeatedly, because the weath-