

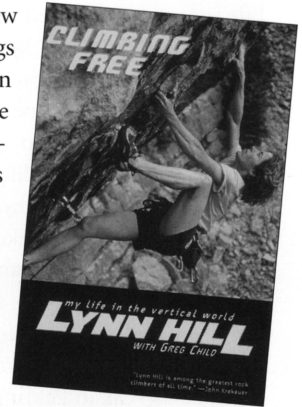
important contribution to the climbing canon, one that serves not only as an important reference book, but fun read as well.

MIKEL VAUSE, AAC

Climbing Free: My Life in the Vertical World. LYNN HILL WITH GREG CHILD. FOREWORD BY JOHN LONG. NEW YORK: W. W. NORTON, 2002. HARDCOVER. \$24.95.

It has often been said that climbing can be a metaphor for life, but few books have given such thoughtful attention to the lessons each brings to the other as *Climbing Free*. Interwoven among the tales of Lynn Hill's better known accomplishments are many poignant stories of the diverse personalities, familiar and remote landscapes, and communities that influenced her growth as a climber and a person. It goes without saying that the influence went both ways.

There are plenty of anecdotes from the legendary climbs to satisfy one's taste for exciting crux moves as well, from pioneering traditional free ascents in California in the 70s; early 5.13 and 5.14 sport climbs in the East, Europe, and elsewhere; coming back from a near-fatal groundfall to championship competition climbing and sponsored travels to exotic crags in the 80s and 90s; to the untouchable free and free-in-a-day ascents of the route by which humans first climbed El Capitan, the Nose.



What sets *Climbing Free* apart are the insights into the meaning of Lynn Hill's experience. She speaks from a unique vantage point, having achieved many goals that others deemed impossible for her, or at all. Along the way, she observes the extremes of human behavior, from the most supportive to the most selfish, lifelong bonds and recurring loss of friends to the mountains, life on the road, a home abroad, working truly-odd jobs for survival during the lean years, and the different challenges of a corporate climbing team.

What shines through is the importance of maintaining a positive outlook and enjoying one's precious time playing with friends, and behaving responsibly toward the natural environment and communities upon which these moments depend.

The foreword by former Hill-boyfriend John Long is full of his characteristic warmth and humor. Greg Child has supplied the supporting material and seamless structure that have made his tales of exciting and hilarious adventures so readable. The honest voice and compassionate heart behind the book remain true to the very first drafts from many years before.

Like Lynn Hill herself, *Climbing Free* climbs free of all artificially imposed limitations. Her philosophy is best described in her own words: "No matter where I am in the world or what summit I've attained, the greatest sense of fulfillment in my life is connected to people. I am fortunate to be part of a big international family bonded by a common passion. Throughout all my experiences over the years, the sheer joy of playing on the rocks with my friends has been the underlying inspiration for my love of climbing. What started out as a simple outing on a rocky outcrop in southern California twenty-six years ago has become a vehicle for evolving as a person, learning about the world, and sharing those experiences with others."

BOB PALAIS, AAC