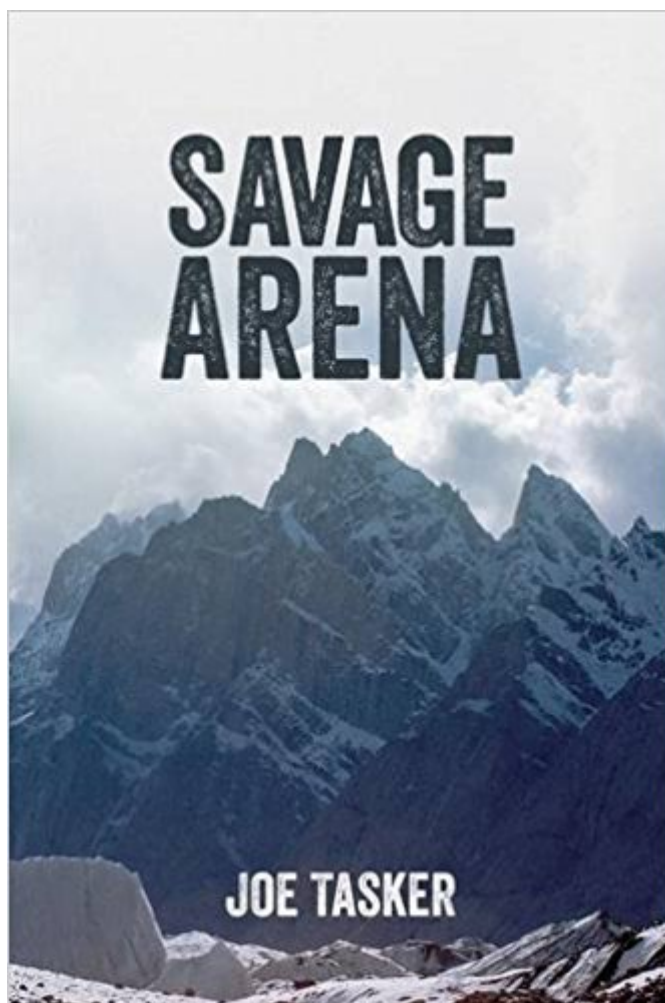


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# Savage Arena



## Synopsis

Joe Tasker lies, struck down by a tooth abscess, in a damp, bug-infested room in the Himalaya, wondering if he will be well enough to climb Dunagiri, his first venture to the 'big' mountains. He is there with Dick Renshaw to attempt to make a two-man ascent of the Peak - one of the first true alpine-style expeditions to the Greater Ranges; an attempt that forms part of this tale of adventure in the savage vertical arena of hostile mountains. Joe Tasker was one of Britain's foremost mountaineers. A pioneer of lightweight mountaineering and a superbly gifted writer, in *Savage Arena* he vividly describes his participation in the first British winter ascent of the North Face of the Eiger; his first ascent of the West Wall of Changabang with Peter Boardman - considered to be a preposterous plan by the established climbing world; the first ascent of the North Ridge of Kangchenjunga; and his two unsuccessful attempts to climb K2, the second highest mountain in the world. This is a story of single-minded determination, strength and courage in a pursuit which owes much of its value and compulsion to the risks entailed - risks which often stimulate superlative performances. It is also a story of the stresses, strains and tensions of living in constant anxiety, often with only one other person, for long periods in which one is never far from moments of terror, and of the close and vital human relationships which spring from those circumstances. It is a moving, exciting and inspirational book about the adventuring spirit which seeks endless new climbing challenges to face, alluring problems to solve and difficulties to overcome, for it is not reaching the summit which is important, but the journey to it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Joe Tasker was one of Britain's foremost mountaineers. He was a pioneer of lightweight, 'Alpine-style' climbing in the Greater Ranges and had a special talent for writing. He died, with his friend Peter Boardman, high on Everest in 1982 while attempting the previously unclimbed North East Ridge. Their deaths marked the end of a remarkable era in British mountaineering. Born in Hull in 1948, Joe began rock climbing in his teens. Drawn to mountaineering, he made many remarkable ascents in the Alps, including the first British winter ascent of the North Face of the Eiger, before moving to the Greater Ranges. Here, Joe pioneered routes of extreme technical difficulty in a bold, Alpine-style - at a time when huge expeditions and siege tactics were still the mountaineering norm. Peter and Joe left two legacies. One was their great endeavour, their climbs on high peaks with bold, lightweight innovative methods; the second is the books they wrote and left behind. Both had developed a special talent for writing. Joe's first book *Everest the Cruel Way* is an exciting account of his winter attempt on Everest and his second book, *Savage Arena*, was finished just before he left for Everest in 1982. Both have become mountaineering classics. The Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature was established in Pete and Joes' honour, and is presented annually to the author or co-authors of an original work which has made an outstanding contribution to mountain literature. For more information about the Boardman Tasker Prize, visit: [www.boardmantasker.com](http://www.boardmantasker.com)

This book vividly portrays mountain climbing "on the edge" in both the literal and metaphorical senses of the term. Joe Tasker and his climbing partners felt challenged to climb the most difficult peaks in the most difficult manners possible: in the winter, without oxygen, in small teams, via untried routes. Eventually Joe paid the ultimate price, disappearing on Mt. Everest in 1982. He handed in the manuscript for this book just before leaving for that final adventure, and this book has stood the test of time. Very well written, it describes climbs in the Alps and Himalayas in compelling terms but without any sensationalizing; indeed, if anything, the author understates the difficulties and dangers. He gives insight into the unique personalities who engage in this most demanding of sports, leaving the reader with the feeling of having gotten to know, and now miss, Joe and his friends.

vividly factual account of knife edge mountaineering, on expeditions modest in size- extreme in challenge  
*Savage Arena* is a fascinating description of the idiosyncratic personalities & extraordinary abilities of renowned climbers of this era  
A successful depiction of what is, to many, inexplicable: mindset of vocational extreme mountaineers

Having read a ridiculous amount of mountaineering books -according to my wife-, I like this so far the best. It's a well written, honest and captivating account of some of his climbs. Everything is in it envy, failure, succes, fear, misery, laziness, .. and not just a "buffed-up" story that makes everyone look good. Nice.

I enjoyed reading the climbing exploits of Joe Tasker and his friends. The dedication and suffering that elite climber have and endure is remarkable. The book is similar to other books by climbers with their hopes, fears and tales of climbing. Being safe in my armchair, its tough for me to imagine the hardships and I keep asking "Why?". As I like to read "travel" books, this book fulfills my knowledge of the regions that Joe climbed. This books is a good read for those who want an true life adventure story, want to learn about the Himalayas and are interested in climbing.

Slow at times and perhaps sometimes rambling but still kept my interest. Glad I hung in there to the end.

Unfortunately, I had just finished reading Steve House's excellent book Beyond the Mountain, before I read this book and for me, Savage Arenaped in comparison and will not be memorable. It's an okay read and does offer one or two exciting moments and some interesting bits about the rigors of trekking. If you are an alpinist junkie like me, you will read it because we enjoy every climber's story.

One of the most entrancing mountaineering books I've read. What stands out is Tasker's humbleness - he really believes that he's not as skilled as the likes of Boardman. I loved the fact that he was involved mainly in small expeditions. It made for a more intimate experience. And in these days of big, highly commercial expeditions, the story of Tasker's first trip to the Himalayas when he and Dick Renshaw drove themselves all the way to India in a clapped-out van (Renshaw having only passed his driving test the day before they left) is a time-capsule gem.

This is a poignant and fascinating account of Tasker's climbing career. If he had not died shortly after the completion of this book it would simply be another fine account of the dangers, frustrations, camaraderie and triumphs of climbing the big mountains. However the reader is let so deeply into the psyche of a skilled mountaineer that even over 30 years later the loss of Tasker and Boardman still seems so fresh.

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