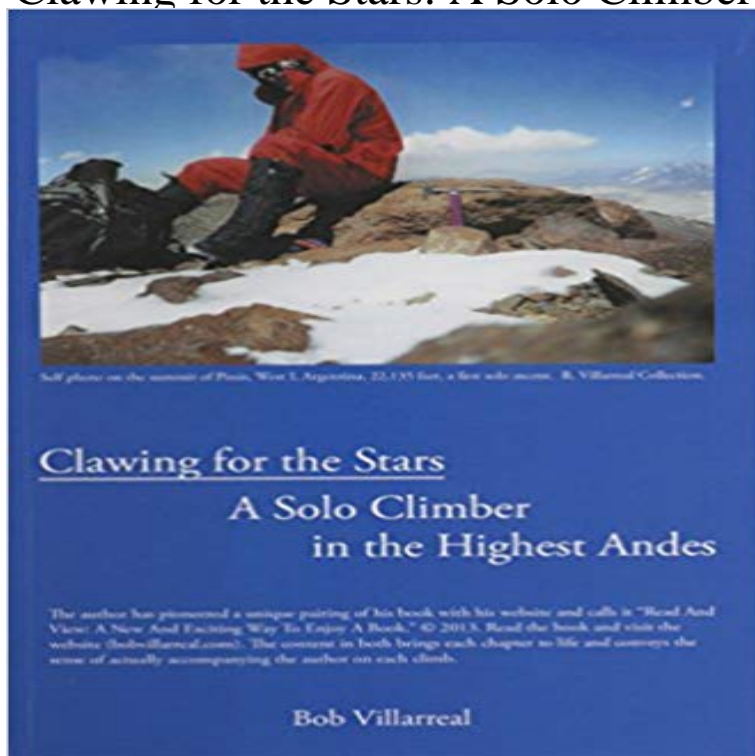


Clawing for the Stars: A Solo Climber in the Highest Andes



When most altitude climbers reach their mid-forties, they slow down-but for Bob Villarreal, these years marked the beginning of his climbing career rather than the end. At forty, he took a rock-climbing class, but it wasn't what he was looking for. In a moment of pure and life-changing serendipity, an article about climbing the Andes lit a new fire within him, and an obsession was born. At that point, Bob retired from business and took up mountain climbing. He lost his heart to the staggering, raw, and wild beauty of the High Andes, returning there time and time again to challenge himself, almost always on his own. In defiance of the basic rules of wilderness exploration, Bob traveled solo, well aware that calamity was only one loose rock away and that his survival was never guaranteed. One might wonder why anyone - especially someone in middle age -- would climb alone in the Andes even once, let alone nineteen times (out of thirty total climbs). It's a question that Villarreal himself can't adequately answer. Was he in search of adventure, danger, or deeper meaning in his life-and did he ever find his elusive purpose on the mountain? This memoir recalls his perilous adventures on famous Andean peaks as well as mountains in the remotest parts of the Andes along the lengthy border between Chile and Argentina. For content that supports each chapter, visit: bobvillarreal.com/. Blog site: bobvillarreal.blogspot.com/. To view a short video about the book, visit: youtube.com/watch?v=L8S9S4fHHpY

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