



Finding Jim

Susan Oakey-Baker

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Finding Jim describes Susan Oakey-Baker's struggle to confront the realities of life after the death of her husband, renowned mountain guide Jim Haberl, the first Canadian to summit the most difficult mountain in the world: K2. For fifteen years they had spent time adventuring together around the world: skiing the Himalaya, rafting in Nepal and mountaineering in North America. In time, they got married, solidified a home for themselves in Whistler, British Columbia, and planned on starting a family. But the future Susan had imagined was not meant to be, and when Jim was killed in an avalanche in the University Range of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in Alaska, she was faced with a loss greater than anything she ever could have expected.

After Jim's death, Susan spent time retracing the adventures they took together, in a desperate and obsessive attempt to gather and hold on to as many memories of him as she could. She travelled to the place in Alaska where he lost his life; searched the Queen Charlotte Islands where they had first met; trekked to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro where they had journeyed the year before his death; and scoured the hills around their Whistler home for traces of the man she had expected to spend the rest of her life with.

In the spirit of books like Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking* and Maria Coffey's *Fragile Edge*, Susan Oakey-Baker writes eloquently of her efforts to relive and reanalyze her husband's death, to defy the pain that such a loss causes and embrace the healing power of mountains, adventure and wilderness as she reimagines her new life.

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