



Crazy for the Storm: A Memoir of Survival

Norman Ollestad

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Dad Said

Ollestad, we can do it all. . . .

Why do you make me do this?

Because it's beautiful when it all comes together.

I don't think it's ever beautiful.

One day.

Never.

We'll see, my father said. Vamanos.

From the age of three, Norman Ollestad was thrust into the world of surfing and competitive downhill skiing by the intense, charismatic father he both idolized and resented. While his friends were riding bikes, playing ball, and going to birthday parties, young Norman was whisked away in pursuit of wild and demanding adventures. Yet it were these exhilarating tests of skill that prepared "Boy Wonder," as his father called him, to become a fearless champion--and ultimately saved his life.

Flying to a ski championship ceremony in February 1979, the chartered Cessna carrying Norman, his father, his father's girlfriend, and the pilot crashed into the San Gabriel Mountains and was suspended at 8,200 feet, engulfed in a blizzard. "Dad and I were a team, and he was Superman," Ollestad writes. But now Norman's father was dead, and the devastated eleven-year-old had to descend the treacherous, icy mountain alone.

Set amid the spontaneous, uninhibited surf culture of Malibu and Mexico in the late 1970s, this riveting memoir, written in crisp Hemingwayesque prose, recalls Ollestad's childhood and the magnetic man whose determination and love infuriated and inspired him--and also taught him to overcome the indomitable. As it illuminates the complicated bond between an extraordinary father and his son, Ollestad's powerful and unforgettable true story offers remarkable insight for us all.

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