



## Simpson on the Mountain

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My favorite song lately is “Ali in the Jungle” by [The Hours](#). You may have heard it on a Nike TV advertisement recently called “the human chain”. The link for that ad is at the end of this article. I find the song incredibly inspiring. Here are some of the lyrics:

It's, not, how you start, it's how you finish,  
And it's, not, where you're from, it's where you're at,

Everybody gets knocked down,  
Everybody gets knocked down,  
How quick are you gonna' get up?  
How quick are you gonna' get up?  
Everybody gets knocked down,  
Everybody gets knocked down,  
How quick are you gonna' get up?  
Just how are you gonna' get up?

Like Ali in the jungle,  
Like Nelson in jail,  
Like Simpson on the mountain,  
With odds like that, they were bound to fail  
Like Keller in the darkness,  
Like Adam's in the dock,  
Like Ludwig Van, how I loved that man, the man went deaf and didn't give a damn.



Anyway, I did some homework about the people referred to in the song. All of them overcame incredible odds, but I was particularly drawn to Simpson on the mountain. The song refers to Joe Simpson, pictured above, author, of “[Touching the Void](#)”. In the book Simpson recounts how he and a friend climbed a 21,000 foot peak in South America. They got caught in a storm and Joe nearly died, probably should have died.

Here's a quick summary of his ordeal. As Joe and his climbing partner, Simon Yates, are descending the mountain Joe falls and hits a rock so hard that he drives his shin bone all the way through his knee and into his femur. Not only was he in incredible pain, but he was over 20,000 feet up on a mountain in the middle of a storm. His friend's face said what words could not, “You're a dead man.” But they did not quit. Yates began to lower Simpson on a 200 foot rope down the mountain. Each time Joe would get to the end of the rope he would secure himself to the rocks until Simon climbed down to him. This worked until at the end of the rope Joe was hanging in midair. Simon had no choice but to drop his friend, knowing he would not survive. Yates agonized over this decision, but he couldn't hang on forever, he had to let go. He killed his friend, or so he thought. Joe fell down into a crevasse and was buried from sight when Simon came to look for him. Yates gave him up for dead and, with a heavy heart headed back to camp several miles away.

But Simpson wasn't done. In incredible pain he climbed up out of the 100 foot crevasse and then crawled for several days back to camp. He arrived there in the middle of the night, dehydrated and delirious. The only way he knew he was in camp was because he had crawled straight through the latrine. He started moaning and his friend awoke and popped his head out of the tent. Joe Simpson had miraculously survived something that surely should have killed him. Only his incredible bravery saved him. As the song says, with odds like that he was bound to fail.

We all fall down. We all experience failure and despair. Thank goodness there are people like Joe Simpson and bands like The Hours to give us the strength to continue on our journey. I hope that you are as inspired to chase your dreams by this story and song as I am. When I feel beaten I think about Joe crawling over those rocks for miles in agony and I know I can overcome the challenges I am facing. Thank you for allowing me to share this heart-rending story with you.

If you are interested [click here](#) to watch the Nike ad I mentioned.