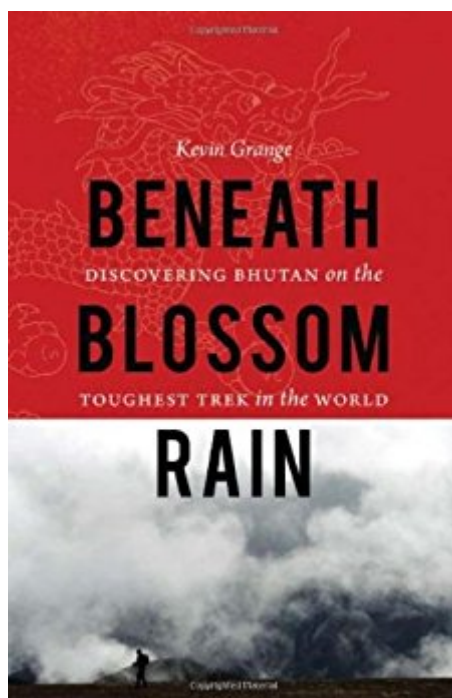


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Beneath Blossom Rain: Discovering Bhutan On The Toughest Trek In The World



Synopsis

In a remote kingdom hidden in the Himalayas, there is a trail said to be the toughest trek in the world—twenty-four days, 216 miles, eleven mountain passes, and enough ghost stories to scare an exorcist. In 2007 Kevin Grange decided to acquaint himself with the country of Bhutan by taking on this infamous trail, the Snowman Trek. He was thirty-three, at a turning point in life, and figured the best way to go at a crossroad was up. Against a backdrop of Buddhist monasteries and soaring mountains, Grange ventured beyond the mapped world to visit time-lost villages and sacred valleys. In the process, recounted here with a blend of laugh-out-loud humor, heartfelt insight, and acute observation, he tested the limits of physical endurance, met a fascinating assortment of characters, and discovered truths about faith, hope, and the shrouded secret of blossom rain. Beneath Blossom Rain, Grange's account of his journey, packs an adventure story, a romantic twist, and a celebration of group travel into a single entertaining book. The result is the ultimate journey for any traveler, armchair or otherwise. Along with high adventure, it delivers an engaging look at Bhutan—a country that governs by a policy of Gross National Happiness and that many regard as the last Shangri-La. Watch a book trailer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book despite the critical reviews and as usual, agree with those who discern poor writing, although it wasn't much of a stretch here. We went on a whitewater kayaking/cultural trip in Bhutan 6 years ago and I can corroborate the author's descriptions of the achingly lovely scenery and heart-warming tales of the sweet Bhutanese people (my favorite moment occurred when I was sitting in my boat on the bank of a river and a woman came to the edge, looked in my eyes and asked, "Madam, are you happy?") However, as others remarked, the writing was self-indulgent and cringe-worthy (I'll use that term again as it's so apt)--"Operation Ingrid;" "My valley;" "...but it was quite another to stroll into a remote outpost occupied by Germans [a campsite]. It was crazy and, perhaps, life threatening." Yikes! This was "Diary of a Wimpy Kid Who Went On the Hardest Trek in the World With Some Totally Awesome People." I appreciated the first-hand daily description of the trek, but would have expected more sophisticated prose from a someone with a college degree in creative writing. Again, the title is beautiful, but the rest of the book fell flat. Oh, and Mt. Everest is 29,035 feet, not 29,092. But Kev got to go back on the trek several more times (twice as a guide), so maybe we'll see something else more interesting from this "award-winning freelance writer."

I just finished reading this today. It's way more than a travelogue, which is all I thought it would be. I had been considering doing this trek and was curious to know more about it. The book certainly helped with that, but there was so much more. The author took a time-out from his regular life and went half-way around the World all by himself. He was seeking to learn something undefined; perhaps about himself, about life, answers that would help him move forward. Well I did the same thing for the same reasons two years ago (though my trek was in Sikkim). In reading this book I realized that the author was beautifully describing many of the thoughts and emotions that I experienced on my trip. It was wonderful to be reminded of these through the author's obviously honest and heartfelt prose, and to realize that another person in this situation had such similar feelings. Five stars for keeping it real. Another wonderful undercurrent in this book is the author's encounters with Buddhist philosophy along the way. Being in the land of a million prayer flags, monasteries, and monks, one is continually challenged to look at things a different way. The author clearly experienced this, and reading about his simple, honest moments of learning and self-discovery tend to have a similar effect on the reader (at least this one). This was a great read for me in many ways. But if I could ask the author one question, it would be this; "Hey Kev, what ever happened to Ingrid?"

Kevin Grange's "Beneath Blossom Rain" is an extremely well written, very entertaining memoir about Bhutan and his taking on the toughest trek in the world - the Snowman Trek. Along this very challenging trail, the author has woven in interesting information, profound insight and lots of humor as he and his fellow trekkers undertake the 24 day, 216 mile trek where they are faced with trekking at especially high altitudes as they cross 11 high mountain passes (7 of which are over 16,000 feet) in the Himalayas of Bhutan. His descriptions are so well done that the reader can easily picture the group being warmly greeted by the Bhutanese villagers in remote areas, playing ball and shooting archery with the children , watching the traditional Bhutanese dances, learning to thresh wheat and joining families for yak butter tea - a few examples of the connection and enjoyment that the trekkers and the villagers experienced in being together. The reader is treated to an inside look at Bhutan, its people and its landscape. If you have been to Bhutan, he will bring back special memories. For those who have not yet been, you will want to pack your bags to see this magical kingdom. An amazing journey with adventure, group travel, spirituality, Bhutan, Buddhism and trekking....they're all here, rolled into "Beneath Blossom Rain". Through the author's honest and engaging style, I have truly felt a part of his journey and I am inspired and hopeful to one day, again, hike in his tracks. A wonderful book!!

Beneath Blossom Rain is an excellent debut book from Grange. Having been to Bhutan twice and having hiked the Snowman Trek, I must say that Grange's book helped me relive those experiences. Once I started reading, I couldn't put the book down. It's like I was transported back to Bhutan and doing the Snowman Trek again. Grange does a wonderful job of capturing the spirit of Bhutan by weaving together a story that includes the Snowman Trek itself (a trek often referred to as the "toughest trek in the world"), his own personal soul-searching journey, the interesting personalities of his fellow trekkers and Bhutanese support staff, and plenty of fascinating facts about Bhutan -- past and present. I recommend this book not only to anyone interested in Bhutan and the Snowman Trek, but also to anyone interested in travel, soul searching, or just a good book by a fresh new author. I can't wait to read Grange's next travel memoir -- wherever that may take him.

I bought this book with a preset bias since I will be hiking the Snowman Trek this fall. I have also visited Bhutan previously so much of his general information on Bhutan was well known to me but would be valuable to anyone who has not had a chance to visit this wonderful country. I liked his stories about the trek a great deal. I found his personal "vision quest" a bit contrived. Even with this downside, the book is a good read

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