

## Nima

**Adam Popescu**

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Adam Popescu's *Nima* is a heroine's journey wherein the call to adventure is shaped by feminism as a choice. Set against the backdrop of Mount Everest, this portrait of a young Sherpa woman is a breathlessly climbing, thrillingly high-stakes coming-of-age story.

After years of slogging through losses, things are looking up for Nima's traditional family. She and her sister are betrothed to marry a longtime family friend, Norbu. When Norbu makes a decision that sends the family into turmoil, Nima realizes that it's time to start making some decisions of her own. Her fight for agency sends her climbing up the highest mountain in the world.

Nima's is truly a quest of epic proportions. Though the first few chapters are driven by exposition, they are worth sticking out to be swept away by the expedition that follows. While Nima never really seems sure of where she's going, she's tough, smart, and determined, and it's a privilege to discover Everest through her eyes.

Part of the book's magic is that it doesn't play down the difficulties that Nima faces as her journey snowballs. Women are considered bad luck on the mountain, and Nima's empowerment requires that she stare down threats not just to her personhood, but to her life. It's unfortunate that most of Nima's choice-making is more about the men around her than it is about her own visions for her future, but the narration is still clear about the oppressive forces that Nima faces. With the white journalist she's guiding up the mountain as a foil, Nima's story opens up room for conversations about what Eurocentric feminism misunderstands.

*Nima* is the perfect book club pick—full of high stakes storytelling that everyone will devour, with plenty of thought-provoking nuances to explore in discussion.

JESSIE HORNESS (May/June 2019)

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