

Shook: An Earthquake, a Legendary Mountain Guide, and Everest's Deadliest Day

Jennifer Hull

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That climbing Mount Everest is a risky and dangerous endeavor is well known, but never has that been more true than it was in April of 2015, when a massive earthquake struck Nepal, resulting in the deadliest day so far on the mountain. Jennifer Hull's *Shook* recounts the story of a group of adventurers who were caught in the disaster.

Much of the story involves Dave Hahn, an experienced guide who had reached Everest's summit more times than any non-Nepali. In the spring of 2015, Hahn and his team took eight clients to Everest. Through a narrative approach that's complemented by excerpts from Hahn's blog, the book details their ascent to base camp and onward, their reaction to the earthquake that rocked much of Nepal, the horrors that took place on the mountain, and the group's perilous return from danger.

While it is most concerned with Hahn's expedition and how it was interrupted by the earthquake, the book mixes in-the-moment storytelling with greater context. It covers other Everest disasters and the conditions that led to the deaths of specific climbers, making the risks for Hahn's group clear. Hull also goes into detail about the roles that sherpas play, the financial costs of an expedition, and the ways that climbs have been chronicled, all of which help in understanding the breadth of the Everest experience. The book's useful supplemental material includes photographs of the members of the expedition, thorough endnotes, and maps of Everest that call out the locations of story points and capture the scope of the climbing challenge.

With its focus on an expedition that worked to survive a calamity, *Shook* is a fascinating true adventure story coupled with an account of Mount Everest's allure and danger.

JEFF FLEISCHER (September / October 2020)

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