

Yak Girl: Growing Up in the Remote Dolpo Region of Nepal

Dorje Dolma

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Dorje Dolma's fascinating memoir, *Yak Girl*, concentrates on a childhood in Nepal. Though marked by hardships, her story is filled with hope and strength.

The remote district of Dolpo had no electricity or running water, no transportation, and no access to medical care. From the time she was very little, Dolma had grown up with many responsibilities, watching after her younger siblings and caring for herds of sheep and goats. She spent her days wandering the mountains, seeking grazing spots for her animals, and protecting them from wolves and snow leopards.

Dolma's extraordinary book offers an insider's perspective on the family structures, ceremonies, and rituals of a remote culture. Struggles are related in a straightforward manner, and recollections are marked by happiness and family love. Language rings with honesty and dignity.

When Dolma was nine, the family moved to Kathmandu to treat her scoliosis; in that city, they were very poor, and had to beg for money. Dolma writes about learning to let go of the shame she felt, and about sharing what she had with others who were worse off. Hers is a beautiful account of personal character.

Dolma was placed in a boarding school; eventually, a sponsor brought her to America, where her scoliosis could be treated. The confusion and fear she felt as she left her home country for a foreign land comes through clearly, speaking to her incredible strength and bravery.

Yak Girl is an extraordinary and insightful account of a young girl's strength of will.

CATHERINE THURESON (January/February 2018)

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