



Mountain to Mountain

Shannon Galpin

ISBN: 9781250046642* Paperback * St. Martin's Press * December 2015

READING GROUP GUIDE

About the book:

Being inspired to act can take many forms. For some it's taking a weekend to volunteer, but for Shannon Galpin, it meant leaving her career, selling her house, launching a nonprofit and committing her life to advancing education and opportunity for women and girls. Focusing on the war-torn country of Afghanistan, Galpin and her organization, Mountain2Mountain, have touched the lives of hundreds of men, women and children. As if launching a nonprofit wasn't enough, in 2009 Galpin became the first woman to ride a mountain bike in Afghanistan. Now she's using that initial bike ride to gain awareness around the country, encouraging people to use their bikes "as a vehicle for social change and justice to support a country where women don't have the right to ride a bike."

In *Mountain to Mountain*, her lyric and honest memoir, Galpin describes her first forays into fundraising, her deep desire to help women and girls halfway across the world, her love for adventure and sports, and her own inspiration to be so much more than just another rape victim. During her numerous trips to Afghanistan, Shannon reaches out to politicians and journalists as well as everyday Afghans — teachers, prison inmates, mothers, daughters — to cross a cultural divide and find common ground. She narrates harrowing encounters, exhilarating bike rides, humorous episodes, and the heartbreak inherent in a country that is still recovering from decades of war and occupation.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What cause do you believe in most passionately? What would you be willing to give up for it?
- 2) How has Shannon's bike made it easier for her to gain entry into the male society she would be shunned from as a local woman? How is she perceived by the men she encounters?
- 3) How has Shannon's personal obstacles inspired her professional accomplishments?
- 4) Shannon has a young daughter that both motivates her to continue her work, and also causes her to worry at times that she should be at home with her daughter instead of abroad. What would you do in Shannon's position?



- 5) How would you explain the impact that the Mountain 2 Mountain organization has on a young girl from a Western culture?
- 6) Do you think that Shannon could and would have the same impact if she were a man doing the same work? Would she have more or less influence and why?
- 7) Shannon connects with women who have been jailed for crimes they did not commit. What about their experiences bridges the gaps of language and culture that separate them? What about their experiences divides them?
- 8) For Shannon, leaving her career and the life she'd always known to start a non-profit was the best way for her to make an impact and affect change. How could the average person with a job and a life outside of Afghanistan begin to also make a difference however small?
- 9) After reading *Mountain to Mountain*, has your understanding of the men and women of Afghanistan and their culture changed? If so, how?
- 10) Which other ground-breaking women and/or explorers does Shannon's story remind you of? How have they left their mark on the world?

Want to learn more about Shannon Galpin?

Visit her at

www.shannongalpin.com

