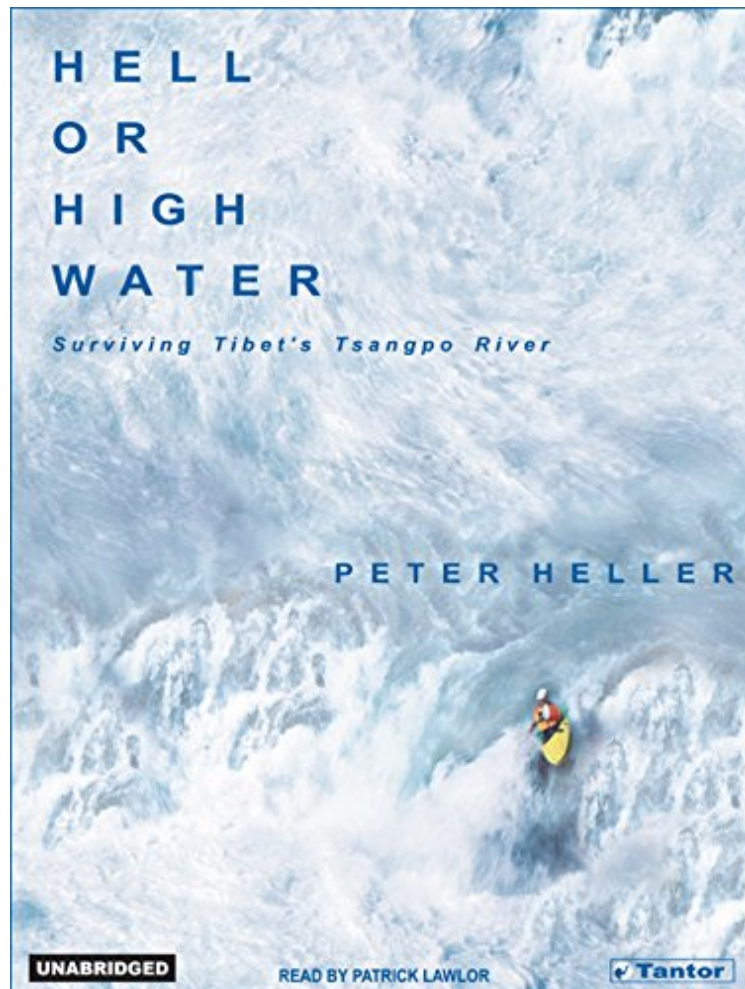


[Free download] Hell or High Water: Surviving Tibet's Tsangpo River

Hell or High Water: Surviving Tibet's Tsangpo River

Peter Heller

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Peter Heller : Hell or High Water: Surviving Tibet's Tsangpo River before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hell or High Water: Surviving Tibet's Tsangpo River:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well-told; hits all the right notes By Karl Knickmeyer I had read and admired several of Peter Heller's novels, but knew little about him. When this book was recommended by , I leapt on it immediately. I've been a serious whitewater kayaker since the late 70's (good old days before the rivers got crowded), having taken it up after a serious climbing accident - back broken, both knees destroyed - but still needing a thrill sport. I identified with the author, hiking painfully on a bad hip along the river to document the descent. Most of my best friends are old boaters in their 60's and 70's, and we stand in awe at the exploits of newer generations of paddlers. Though we might occasionally complain " Well yeah, if we'd had modern boat designs in space age materials..." , hey, there's no question; these guys are the real thing, and I'm glad Heller was there to tell the story. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. consistently engaging By Alan R. Tower This kayak expedition follows

the trail of famed plant explorer Frank Kingdon Ward. I read all of Ward's books and now I am wrapping up all of Heller's. Heller is readable and engaging regardless of topic. He understands our thoughts and contradictions, noble and otherwise. He tells a great story. The Painter is my favorite Heller work if you want to sample the first time. However, if kayaking or Himalayan trekking is just your fare you will find this most satisfying. As with all his works Heller gets the reader immersed, this time literally in the icy, thundering river of the Himalayas. I tend to read every work when I discover an author of this talent. I read all of Kingdon Ward's books nearly 20 years ago, and now Heller has brought me back to the Himalayas the only way I ever want to travel that treacherous terrain -- by reading. I got to know the intricacies of the expedition and its porters and the human side of inhumanly skilled kayakers who make the story notable. So grab your paddle and read this one or your brush and read The Painter a five star novel. Or visit the surf or simply go apocalyptic. Heller offers it all in his library. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well written and engaging real adventure. By Rick McDaniel I'm a whitewater kayaker so I may have more interest in this story than people who don't kayak. Though I don't know the men who were on the expedition I do know of many of them and have read of them and/or seen them in kayaking videos. That being said, If you enjoy adventure you might enjoy this book even if you aren't a kayaker. There is a lot of real life drama and adventure both on and off the water. Hell or High Water may be the most engaging non-fiction book that I've ever read.

The Tsangpo Gorge in southeastern Tibet has lured explorers and adventurers since its discovery. Sacred to the Buddhists, the inspiration for Shangri La, the Gorge is as steeped in legend and mystery as any spot on earth. As a river-running challenge, the remote Tsangpo is relentlessly unforgiving, more difficult than any stretch of river ever attempted. Its mysteries have withstood a century's worth of determined efforts to explore its length. The finest expedition paddlers on earth have tried. Several have died. All have failed. Until now. In January 2002, in the heart of the Himalayan winter, a team of seven kayakers launched a meticulously planned assault of the Gorge. The paddlers were river cowboys, superstars in the universe of extreme kayaking who hop from continent to continent ready for the next death-defying pursuit. Accompanying them was author Peter Heller. A world-class kayaker in his own right, Heller has logged countless river miles and several major first descents. He joined the Tsangpo Expedition as a member of the ground support team and official expedition journalist and was also granted the exclusive opportunity to write the book about the descent. Hell or High Water is that book--greatly expanded from his coverage for Outside magazine. Filled with history, white-knuckle drama, and mutiny in one of the world's most storied-and remote-locations, Hell or High Water is as riveting as any of the great epic adventures throughout history. Publication coincides with the release of a documentary about the expedition by National Geographic.

From Publishers Weekly Dedicated kayakers have long had their hearts set on the Tsangpo River, which cuts a gorge through Tibet many times deeper and steeper than the Grand Canyon; successfully navigating it is akin to snowboarding down Everest. The last major expedition of the 1990s ended when one of the kayakers drowned in the raging currents, but in 2002 a group led by adventure filmmaker Scott Lindgren, one of the extreme sport's most prominent heroes, gave it another shot. Heller was assigned to cover the expedition for Outside and, despite having completely worn out the cartilage in one hip, he decided to go for it. The story takes him to one of the most beautiful spots on the planet, still almost entirely untouched, but also subjects him to the ugliest aspects of human nature. Heller is unflinchingly honest about the hostility he faced from Lindgren and his companions, who openly attack the journalist for "getting rich" from their story, as well as the resentment that begins to well inside him at their condescension. Meanwhile, the locals hired to carry the equipment realize they have the upper hand and start extorting more money for their services. The drama on shore, however, is easily matched--sometimes surpassed--by the action on the river, which includes a few chilling brushes with death. Heller nimbly blends the history of the region into his gripping modern trek, as the crew lives up to the legacy of the great explorers before them. An offhand remark made to the paddlers early in the journey that their story could be the kayaking equivalent of Into Thin Air has come true in the best possible way. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist A river in Tibet called the Yarlung Tsangpo has been the stage for recent works about extreme kayaking, such as The Last River: The Tragic Race for Shangri-la by Todd Balf (2001). Heller knew Doug Gordon, the kayaker whose 1998 death was central to that book. Amid this narrative of a 2002 expedition, Heller reaches for explanations for why kayakers risk their lives on phenomenally dangerous rivers. Bragging rights to a first descent are one reason he offers, and the ineffable euphoria of intense experience is another. Whatever the temptations of radical rafting, Heller's tale--while reporting the white-water expertise of expedition members--focuses more on the group's logistics; on its recurrent haggling with porters; and, as a subplot, on the animosity directed toward the author by the team leader, Scott Lindgren. (They argued about Heller's book contract.) The author will occasionally grind a gear in his transitions between cultural passages, immediate events, and poetical evocations of river-gorge vistas, but he also stokes plenty of the action that propels thrill-seeking readers. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Heller nimbly blends the history of the region into his gripping modern trek.... The kayaking

equivalent of Into Thin Air." ---Publishers Weekly Starred