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Peak #2: The Edge

Tessa McMillan

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Book Review

Title: Peak #2: The Edge
Author: Roland Smith
Reviewer: Tessa McMillan
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books
for Young Readers
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780544341227
Number of Pages: 236
Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

Peak honestly wants to forget his time on Everest. But the film crew who taped his and Sun-jo's Everest climb seek out Peak with a proposition. The richest man in the world, Sebastian Plank, is hosting a Peace Climb for young international climbers, and Plank wants Peak to represent the US. Except there is a catch. The film crew only know the climb will be in Afghanistan. Peak accepts the offer with the condition that his mother join him. Their trip begins with a private jet to Afghanistan and a helicopter ride to the Hindu Kush Mountains. Before the climb begins, film director Phillip Stockwell pushes the crew and climbers to film shots for a documentary ordered by Plank. Peak dozes off during a scene set-up but awakens to find two Afghan guards murdered, one climber badly injured, and nine members of their group kidnapped. With the help of film crew member and ex-Marine, Ethan Todd, Peak and Ethan track down the mercenaries holding the group for ransom. Through Peak's know-how, Ethan's military skills, and a snow leopard's helpful stalking, they foil the mercenaries' plans and escape.

Smith's newest novel and sequel to Peak will grab readers' full attention by taking them on a dangerous thrill ride through the Afghan mountains. For most American readers, the word Afghanistan can conjure some frightening and painful images. But that stigma doesn't deter Smith from setting his book in this wartorn country. As Peak draws closer to the ominous region, both Peak and readers gain a better understanding of Afghanistan's history, culture, and wildlife. This clarity comes through beautifully in Peak's no-nonsense but sharply witty narration. An amazing read from start to finish, The Edge will not disappoint faithful fans of Peak. A must-have for any library and a must-read for both boys and girls ages ten and up.

*Contains mild violence.