



Tilting at Mountains: Love, Tragedy, and Triumph on the World's Highest Peaks

Edurne Pasabán

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* The author reveals the demons that drove her to extreme physical accomplishments at the cost of great suffering story of adventure and personal growth

* Pasaban is one of the best high-altitude climbers in the world today

On May 17, 2010, a 37-year-old Spaniard named Edurne Pasaban became the first woman to climb all fourteen peaks higher than 8,000 meters. This record-breaking accomplishment put the Basque woman on National Geographic's 2010 "Adventurers of the Year" list. The next year, both *The Alpinist* and *Outside* magazines placed her on their "Adventurers of the Year" lists, too.

Pasaban's accomplishment did not come without controversy: Another woman, Korean climber Oh Eun-Sun, claimed to have completed the peaks a few weeks earlier. Later inquiries revealed that Oh Eun-Sun had failed to summit Kangchenjunga in 2009 and her claim was eventually withdrawn, leaving Edurne as the clear victor. But how did she get there?

Published for the first time in English, *Tilting at Mountains* tells Edurne's heartfelt and deeply personal story. She details not only how she came to climb the 8,000-meter peaks---the competitive nature of her Basque heritage played a role, as did, admittedly, an interest in handsome climbing guides---but also how her love for the mountains pulled her from a deep, soul-crushing depression. The book covers her climbs on all the 8,000-meter peaks, some of which were almost cakewalks while others were climbed at great cost, including the loss of close friends.

Tilting at Mountains: Love, Tragedy, and Triumph on the World's Highest Peaks Details

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From Reader Review Tilting at Mountains: Love, Tragedy, and Triumph on the World's Highest Peaks for online ebook

Lara says

Not a *perfect* book (there are a few things I'll chalk up to slight translation errors), but I *really* enjoyed this honest and inspirational look at Edurne Pasabán's journey to becoming a mountaineer, as well as to successfully summing all fourteen of the world's 8000+ meter peaks (or 26,247+ foot peaks, for us Americans). She is the first woman to have done so. Pasabán is very open about the struggles she's faced with depression and with not being able to take herself and her accomplishments seriously, and how important it is to be able to be yourself and learn what you really want out of life and not feel constrained by what kind of life works for others.

Her descriptions of her various expeditions are really well-done--beautiful, horrible, awe- and fear-inspiring... I always forget how dangerous a sport mountain climbing is, until tragedy strikes, as it does all too often.

Anyway, while I have absolutely no desire to ever attempt to climb any sort of mountain, ever, I love reading about others who feel the need to conquer them, and Pasabán is very clear about the fact that while not many of us choose to climb literal mountains, we all have hurdles to jump and goals to complete, whether that's just learning something new, doing a better job at work, or raising a happy, healthy family. As Maurice Herzog says in the final line of Annapurna, "There are other Annapurnas in the lives of men."

Definitely recommended for mountaineers, folks who like reading about mountaineers, or people who just like reading stories about other people working hard to achieve things that are important to them.

Received this book through First Reads--thanks!

Mihai says

Edurne Pasabán's recollection of her quest to climb all 14 8000ers is a fast and engaging read that appeals to all in touch with the sport of mountaineering. As she makes it clear repeatedly, she didn't set out explicitly to become the first woman to achieve this landmark, and she only got engrossed in the challenge once other strong climbers made it a competition. In the end, she added her name to the record books, but more important than the official recognition were the personal satisfaction of having overcome all the difficulties, not just on the mountains, and having put in tremendous mental and physical efforts to complete the objective.

The book is not perfect (it could use some photos, maps or some kind of visuals to complement the narrative), but it is very honest and unpretentious. I thought the part in which Pasabán examines her fight with depression was passionately written, and indeed it takes a lot of courage to confront and then share such a personal condition with the entire world. It was inspiring to see her rebound from hitting rock bottom (and almost taking her own life) to becoming a legend of the mountaineering world.

As a climber, I know many of the unpleasant, frustrating or downright conflicting aspects of expeditions were not detailed in this book. The routes climbed are also not discussed in detail, perhaps giving the

(WRONG) impression that some of the 8000ers may not seem that difficult. However, ultimately this is a story about hope and staying positive, so Pasaban's message is that everything is possible when willing to put in the time and dedication. I look forward to meeting Pasaban in person one day, until then her achievements will continue to inspire me every time I head out to the mountains.

Olga Milemis says

En „Catorce veces ocho mil“ (2011) Edurne Pasaban describe no solamente las expediciones que la llevaron a conquistar los 14 picos más altos del planeta sino que también relata sus comienzos como alpinista y pasa, además, revista a varios aspectos de su vida personal.

El primer encuentro de Edurne con el Himalaya fue en el año 1998 cuando intentó hacer la cumbre del Dhaulagiri, cosa que no logró entonces sino recién en 2008 pero que significó el punto de inflexión en su carrera como montañista en parte porque se enamoró del alpinista Silvio Mondinelli. En el 2001 logró la cima de un ocho mil por primera vez cuando conquistó el Everest. En Abril del 2010 llegó a la cúspide del Annapurna y, cuando exactamente un mes después venció las alturas del Shisha Pangma, se convirtió en la primera mujer en lograr los 14 ocho miles.

Me encantó realmente este libro, no solamente por mi afinidad con el tema y por mi enorme simpatía por Pasaban sino porque está escrito en forma muy amena y con una sencillez que no es común encontrar en los testimonios de los grandes deportistas. Lejos de mostrarse arrogante y transmitir la sensación de haber nacido sabiendo, esta excepcional montañista habla sin tapujos de su aprendizaje, de sus errores, de momentos de debilidad, de decepciones y hasta de un grave cuadro depresivo por el que pasó hace algunos años. Aunque personalmente, lo que más me gustó fue la crónica de los ascensos, estos elementos le otorgan al libro una dimensión reflexiva que vale la pena tener en cuenta.

Deseo destacar que, si bien el lenguaje es entretenido y coloquial, el libro está correctamente escrito y parece haber pasado por un buen lectorado. Sin embargo, se ha deslizado un error en la página 304, donde la autora menciona por lo menos tres veces a un tal Jean Troillet a quien describe como una alpinista suizo, guía y fotógrafo, de setenta y dos años, aun en actividad. Por la caracterización, supongo que se debe tratar de Jean Troillet (que tiene hoy 67, o sea que tenía 62 cuando se publicó el libro) que fue quien descendió del Everest haciendo algunos trechos montado en un snowboard.

Gerry Fitzgerald says

I have read several dozen mountaineering books (a wonderful world to enter if you are looking for a reading hobby), and closely followed the last couple of years of Edurne Pasaban's quest to be the first woman climber to summit all 14 of the world's 8,000 meter mountains.

I was pleasantly surprised at how interesting, informative and candid Ms Pasaban was in both her memoir and at a thoroughly enjoyable talk and video show she presented at Hampshire College this past spring. One would expect a mountaineering superstar and celebrity to be a bit more egocentric and guarded about her failings and weaknesses. Ms Pasaban, it seems, enjoys that rare quality of supreme self confidence and

assuredness, that allows her to describe in detail, not only her triumphs, but her failings and weakness as well. She doesn't gloss over the several occasions when she needed to be saved from certain death on the mountains, and goes into great detail describing her mid-career nervous breakdown and eighteen-month debilitation.

Maybe this is the kind of self confidence that comes from accomplishing one of the greatest feats in the history of outdoor adventure. Only other climbers and armchair mountaineers like myself who have read widely on the subject, can appreciate Ms Pasaban's accomplishment. She is truly one of my heroes.

Gerry FitzGerald
East Longmeadow, MA

David Duncan says

Tilting At Mountains, by Edurne Pasaban, is my ninety-first book that I have received and read from Goodreads. This book was the first book that I have read on mountain climbing. What a really good story it's about a young woman, the author of this book, Edurne Pasaban, became the first woman to successfully climb the world's fourteen 8000 meter peaks.

Ensure Pasaban tells us about every climb she made, all the love, tragedy, and triumph on top of the world's highest peaks. It's a story about making friends from different countries and climbing different mountains. Edurne Pasaban tells about the problems they encountered while trying to reach the summit. She describes the way it feels to be on top of the world. The opposite side of this is the times you try to climb the mountains but because of weather or other problems you are not able to make it to the top. I didn't realize the amount of money it takes to be a mountain climber. The other part of the story is the friends, or fellow climbers that have given up their lives for a sport that they love. I am grateful for the insight I received from reading this book.

Kate says

I won a copy of Tilting at Mountains from Goodreads, and I absolutely loved this book! Tilting at Mountains is an addictive read! Pasaban's memoir was an inspiring account of her triumph in being the first woman in the world to climb 14 peaks over 8,000 meters. Besides her success, she endures numerous adversities on the way to reach her record breaking feat. Pasaban's memoir is a testament to the power of perseverance, courage, hard work, and conquering your greatest fears!

Mosco says

Cosa devo votare?

Lei, Edurne? 5 stelle piene. Il libro? boh! Colpa della traduzione? Possibile perché, per esempio, un signore non è di "età media" ma di mezza età, cribbio. Cmq l'ho trovato nell'insieme un po' ingessato e a tratti un po' pedante. D'altronde lei, Edurne, mica fa la scrittrice per professione, lei scala 8000, non è compito suo rendere il suo libro scorrevole e piacevole, tagliare ripetizioni. Editor, dove siete?

Rochelle says

This was such an inspirational book! I can't imagine climbing the peaks that this woman did and under such conditions. Her story was well told and honest. My only complaint was that I had some difficulty with the translation, as it was a translation from the author's original language. However, the message still got across and I appreciated that. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in mountain climbing or defeating the odds with perseverance and determination.

Alison says

This is the story of Edurne Pasaban, of Spain, a mountaineer and first woman to have climbed all fourteen mountain peaks over 8,000 meters, giving her recognition in major magazines. As she became more recognized in the climbing world, she was sponsored on and off by a Spanish network called (Al Filo, de lo imposible) meaning at the edge of the impossible. A Spanish TV station, that record high quality photographic high risk adventures.

Edurne, went through a time of extreme depression, and had to be hospitalized for awhile to be able to function again. Once she was able to cope with all of her issues she realized that the thing that really kept her balanced was her climbing, and the camaraderie she had with others on the mountains. She was determined to reach her goal of reaching all 14 X 8,000 meter climbs. I feel like she gives us a great feel for what it is like to be an avid mountaineer, letting us know what has to be done on these climbs, the risks, the need for close team work, and trust of ones partners, even then, there are always real risks posed.

This story is one of endurance, the search for self awareness, friendships and also that of tragedy.

I would not be able to do what these group of people thrive on, there is always that feeling of fear when I read about their adventures, and they as well, experience this feeling at times. I am glad to have read this well written story from an armchair and not from the side of a mountain. But I truly appreciate all that they go through and their determination to succeed. It makes me feel as if I should get out there and really try and achieve something that I love to do.

The translation of this book was very well done, flows beautifully.

Laura says

I won my copy through First Reads!

I will say, this book needs a new cover. May I suggest a picture of the author on the top of a mountain? As it is, it's a bit cheesy and doesn't really accurately reflect the contents.

This book is a mixed bag. On one hand, the author is brave and has certainly led an exciting life. On the other hand, the writing felt a bit disjointed and bland (though I'm blaming that on the translation). I just felt like there was a little too much name-dropping and not quite enough excitement and action for my taste. It also got really upsetting as people repeatedly died on various mountains; at the end, I was left with more questions than answers. For example, what would motivate people to dedicate their lives to something so dangerous (especially people with worried families at home)? How are these multiple extended trips to Nepal being paid for? And so on. But, on the whole, I liked the book and I found that it kept my interest

throughout.

Mathew Whitney says

Tilting at Mountains: Love, Tragedy, and Triumph on the World's Highest Peaks is the autobiographical account of Edurne Pasabán's attempts, and eventual success, at climbing to the summit of the world's 14 peaks over 8,000 meters. I received this book through Goodreads' First reads program.

The narrative tends to work back on itself every so often to recount where various people were met and try to pin down less specific events, such as when an actual decision was made to climb all 14 peaks. However, I gave it a 4-star rating where I might otherwise have faulted the narrative (which is also translated to English, though I can't attribute any significant issues with the narrative to translation). This is primarily because it is a very inspirational story of a woman accomplishing amazing feats in an area traditionally considered a man's occupation, but not necessarily meeting complete success every step along the way.

This story not only recounts her success, but also her set-backs, and her treatment of them as learning experiences. It recounts her struggles with depression at times when her career was taking off, and her grief as the mountains took many of her friends and acquaintances. It even shows her grace in accepting that another woman may have been the first to reach the goal of reaching all 14 (though one of the summits achieved by the other woman was disputed by others and eventually it was accepted that the author was first).

I've decided this is a book I will hold on to, for my daughter to read in a few years. It sets a strong example of what we've been trying to teach her from the very beginning: you can do anything if you set your mind to it, set goals, have reasonable expectations, and never give up.

Steve says

Disclaimer: I received this book from Goodreads' First Reads program.

The author was the first woman to successfully summit all 14 8,000 KM peaks. She describes her journey from a young girl in Spain doing her first European climbs. During one of those first climbs, she discovers the guide is a cousin of hers, and he later becomes a key member of her team. She spends a lot of time detailing her personal life, falling in love with another (married) climber, and working in the family business. She also describes watching friends and other climbers meet their demise in the mountains. For me, the most interesting parts are her descriptions of the actual climbs. I found this book to be very interesting and a fast read. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a good true life adventure story.

Phylwil says

The story here, of a life and career as a mountain-climber, is a thrilling one, especially since it is punctuated by what appears to be a nervous breakdown. The problem is that the story is told in a dry, almost journalistic, fashion. Despite that, I enjoyed following the author in her quest to climb the world's tallest peaks (fourteen of them) and getting her view of the private society of elite climbers.

I received the book as a goodreads giveaway.

Amy says

I received this book through first reads and I wasn't quite sure how good the book would be. It was a very detailed book on the life of Edurne Pasaban. My favorite thing is reading about her strength and determination. It's always wonderful to read about strong women. While some parts of the book got lost in translation it was a good read. It shows her struggles and her strengths. I can't imagine what it would be like to climb mountains like she did. Some of the decisions she had to make along the way must've been hard. It had to have been extremely difficult not getting support from your loved ones when it comes to your goals.

James says

Edurne Pasaban is credited with being the first woman to summit the world's fourteen 8000 meter mountains. While the main focus of the book centers around this accomplishment, it also touches on growing up in the Basque region of Spain, her family relationships, as well as her battle to come to grips with who she is and what she wants to do with her life. The book covers the time from a shy teen who loved climbing through the final summit she makes to claim the title as the first woman to climb all fourteen peaks. In between these times there were periods of doubt and depression that threatened to derail her quest.

I liked the fact that the book wasn't written from a technical aspect of mountain climbing. The book does make reference to many terms associated with mountaineering but it doesn't get bogged down in trying to explain this aspect of the sport. Having said that, it would have been helpful to have a glossary to make a quick reference to a particular term. I found myself looking up some of the terms to have an idea of what was facing the climbers. One other suggestion that I think would have been great for the book was to include an appendix of each mountain with all the corresponding information about the summit.

I had never heard of Edurne Pasaban before reading this book. Upon reading about the book I was intrigued enough to want to read it and I'm glad I did. I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in mountain climbing or extreme outdoor sports.

This book was given provided in a Goodreads giveaway.
