



The Mountain Shadow

Gregory David Roberts

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The first glimpse of the sea on Marine Drive filled my heart, if not my head. I turned away from the red shadow. I stopped thinking of that pyramid of killers, and Sanjay's improvidence. I stopped thinking about my own part in the madness. And I rode, with my friends, into the end of everything.

Shantaram introduced millions of readers to a cast of unforgettable characters through Lin, an Australian fugitive, working as a passport forger for a branch of the Bombay mafia. In *The Mountain Shadow*, the long-awaited sequel, Lin must find his way in a Bombay run by a different generation of mafia dons, playing by a different set of rules.

It has been two years since the events in *Shantaram*, and since Lin lost two people he had come to love: his father figure, Khaderbhai, and his soul mate, Karla, married to a handsome Indian media tycoon. Lin returns from a smuggling trip to a city that seems to have changed too much, too soon. Many of his old friends are long gone, the new mafia leadership has become entangled in increasingly violent and dangerous intrigues, and a fabled holy man challenges everything that Lin thought he'd learned about love and life. But Lin can't leave the Island City: Karla, and a fatal promise, won't let him go.

The Mountain Shadow Details

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From Reader Review The Mountain Shadow for online ebook

Erin says

This book is a considerable letdown from Shantaram. First, one of the most enjoyable, and admirable, parts of Shantaram was the incredible character development. Nine years after reading it, I can still visualize Prabaker, Karla, and Khaderbai. The Mountain Shadow introduces no memorable characters, and even cheapens the few who carry over from Shantaram. The interaction between Lin and Karla feels more like a gameshow of one liners than a relationship of soulmates. Second, Shantaram was special in that it brought India to life with the sights and smells of the slum, the intricate caste system, the religious melting pot of the city, etc. This novel could have been set anywhere, as the author routinely fell into overly flowery, yet not descriptive, language to describe the setting and atmosphere. Last, this novel lacked direction...or a plot. It mindlessly meandered through 100's of pages. If it were not for my fond memory of Shantaram, I would have tossed this book aside a few chapters in.

Rafal says

Skończyłem. Co za ulga. 00,00 gwiazdek.

Podtrzymuj wszystkie wnioski, które zamieściłem w zapiskach podczas czytania.

Dodałbym tylko do listy bohatera - mój dr. guru, który wygaduje banały przez dobre 10 rozdziałów tocząc filozoficzne dysputy - oczywiście - z głównym bohaterem, gangsterem.

Ta książka jest pretensjonalna, egzaltowana, gupia i pod każdym względem zła.

Pod żadnym pozorem nie należy jej czytać. Nawet nie wiadomo, jak zabawno niektóre fragmenty nie wynagradza mi, jak się przechodzi, czytać coś takiego.

Na koniec mały apel:

Ludzie - jeżeli będziecie w książkach i będzie was kusić - oddajcie pieniądze i karty kredytowe najbliższemu bezdomnemu. Jeżeli zaś, ktoś da Wam tę książkę w prezencie - zerwijcie stosunki.

:-)

Dan Cooley says

90% nonsense, 10% alright that is what I think of this book and even then I think I'm being generous. Where to start! All the characters are the same none of them have any personality they all just say stupid things like "yaar that's so cool" or speak in aphorisms. The only people who I have any clear idea of as a person are Didier and maybe Abdullah, all the other characters are far too shallow with no real personality, they are essentially just names. This really didn't help with the story as I couldn't build any kind of connection with any of the characters even Lin the main character comes across as arrogant and annoying.

The story in general is weak, there's no real core to it, just things happening that are kind of linked and not really that interesting or dramatic. Most of the things that happen don't even involve the main character either. It's also very cheesy especially the last few chapters where it all ends very 'nicely'.

Then there's the philosophy which seems like the whole point of the book. It's boring, offensive, arrogant, nonsense. It's clearly the author's belief and maybe he is trying to start a religion but it's pretty arrogant how he talks through some 'great' spiritual leader Idris and tries to make Lin act as the reader, asking probing questions yet all he can think of is 'so how do you know we're all attached to a great big tendency field?'. It's

ridiculous and even more offensive when characters start saying how genius this idiot is for coming up with it all, Karla listens and says 'it's like being in smartass heaven!' It's such a load of rubbish! He even uses some dopey character to help explain the teachings too, so the reader can easily follow what it all means!

There's then a whole part about how Lin is a writer and everything he does is 'writer things' and then a Russian guy turns up who is also a writer (like seriously?!) so the author can show off about how much he knows about Russian literature. Then everyone it turns out can't talk normally and they all just start saying clever aphorisms to each other like 'Karla is the horse and your job is to ride it'. Then they all become detectives and it's just awful as who is really a detective in real life unless they are in the police? Then all the dramatic things that the main character kept building up, saying things like, 'if I'd known then how terrible it would get', don't actually happen and instead they just come out with more clever things to say.

Overall there are some nice descriptions of India, although I think it's a bit of a rose tinted view that all poor people are really kind and generous and it's so great living in a slum. Some of the ideas of characters are interesting even if they have no substance, like Madam Zou. I read this hoping for Shantaram with less philosophy but instead I got philosophy with less Shantaram. I would say there is a good book somewhere in the 900 pages but the characters are so one dimensional I don't know if there is. Blue Hijab marriage counselling wtf?!

Maria Hamilton says

I think I should get a medal for managing to finish the drivel that was this book! What a slog - I'm so pleased I'm done!

I LOVED his first book Shantaram - we read it as a Bookclub book and we all found it beautifully written, with a host of unforgettable characters. I didn't want it to finish - I had to slow down so I could spend a few more magical moments following Lin's adventures in India. So when Mountain Shadow came out I was so excited to read the next instalment. I'm so sorry I did as it has now ruined Shantaram for me.

This book was just too much - badly edited from the start with rambling passages about smoking chillums, getting high, killing people, killing more people, practicing to kill people, getting high again, running from killers, all interspersed with pages and pages of soppy lovey dovey passages and heavy 'philosophy' - again all clearly written by someone who was high as a kite!

The characters - bar one or two - had lost all their charm. I just didn't care about any of them any more - and I cried my way through Shantaram!

If you liked Shantaram, don't read this book. It is self indulgent and a complete waste of time. Such a shame!

Tania says

Regret is a nicer self that we send into the past from time to time, even though we know it's too late to change what we said, or did.

I loved the descriptions of Bombay and its people. I fell in love with characters already known to me like Didier, but also a whole cast of new ones like Naveen and Oleg. Unfortunately there are also many things I did not like about this book. The main character Lin is one-dimensional, just too good to be true. The whole

guru/self-help/new-agey element felt forced, and not connected to the rest of the story. Lastly, the writing sometimes felt prententious. If you have not read Shantaram I highly recommend it, it's an amazing read with some of the most unforgettable characters I've ever "met", but I think you can safely skip this 2nd book in the series.

The Story: As flamboyant as is the life of this novel's hero, the author's experience has been even more so. Sentenced to 19 years in prison in Australia for armed robbery in 1978, Roberts escaped in broad daylight two years later and hid in India for a decade. Six more years in prison followed, during which he wrote Shantaram (2003). It was an instant best seller; the film rights were sold for \$2 million. In this second installment of Aussie criminal-on-the-run Lin's action-packed life, he's in Bombay, forging documents for a new Mafia family while mourning the loss of his mentor and his beloved, who married a tycoon.

Michael McEvoy says

Maybe I remember Shantaram through rose-coloured glasses, but I have a vivid sense of loving it so much. The writing was exquisite; it felt like I was in India, and could smell the slums and feel the heartache of everyone's struggles.

The Mountain Shadow seems like it's written by a completely different person. The vivid detail is lost, replaced instead by abstract metaphors that make the author come across as arrogant and full of himself. The storyline did not interest me at all. It largely focussed on the war between two rival gangs. Shantaram's love, Karla, returned, and he described her eyes as "Queens" on a chessboard. This was the most overused description in the book. I kid you not, if you have the ebook and do a search for "queens", it would return over 100 matches. Every time she looked at someone, she "flashed them her queens".

He also felt it necessary to split the book into 15 parts. There was nothing distinctly different about each part so this division was unnecessary. And who writes a book that goes up to Part 15 anyway?! I'd give it a miss.

Mary says

I think it is very unhelpful that people are writing reviews for this book when they have not read Shantaram. This is a sequel to the book, if you have not read the first book you are not aware of what this book is based on. Also, it is ridiculous to write a review when you have only read a small portion of the book. READ THE WHOLE BOOK FIRST!

Elyse says

"There's a deep connection between gangsters, faith and death. All of the men in the Sanjay Company felt that their souls were in the hands of a personal God, and they were all devout enough to pray before and after a murder".

The Cycle Killers ...were young. They rode their polished chrome bicycles through the streets of Bombay at suicide speeds.

Lin, (or sometimes called Shantaram), who was back from Goa.. having been gone for two years...kept realizing how much things

had changed since he had been away.... (most of his friends were gone, lush gardens around the mansion was a shamble as the mansion itself deteriorated, and more violence to be concern with).

I might have stayed in Goa, myself, permanently, If I were Lin. Those beaches are lovely!

However,

Lin certainly knew very little about the den of the Cycle Killers.....

who wore "brightly colored tight fitting undershirts, known as banyans, white stovepipe jeans, and the latest fashion brand of running shoes".

"They all slicked their hair back with perfumed oil, wore ostentatious caste-mark tattoos on their faces to protect them against the evil eye, and cover their own eyes with identical mirror – finish aviator sunglasses, as polished as silver bicycles.

"They were, by general agreement among discriminating criminals, the most efficient knife– men money could buy, surpassed in skill by only one man in the city: Hathoda, The nice master for the Sanjay Company".

Lin was having rough days being back in Bombay. Not only with the Cycle Killers and the challenges with the Sanjay Council, but he runs into Ranjit, who married the woman he not only once loved, but still loves: Karla. He would always love Karla he realizes - and feels protective of her. At the same time, he has a girlfriend, Lisa, so of course he feels guilty for his thoughts.

On top of everything else, his soul has just been crushed when he learns he had been manipulated, used, and, "collected", by his adopted father, Khaderbhai.

"But the collector was dead, and I was still an exhibit in the museum of crime he created and left to the world. Sanjay had used me to test his new gun – running contact contact and that made it clear: I had to leave the collection and find my freedom again as soon as possible."

"The Mountain Shadow", is as much of a juicy read ...filled with adventure, conflicts, imagery, great characters, and passion as Gregory David Robert's first book: "Shantaram".

Robert's is a natural storyteller. The dialogue between the characters feels very natural ... and - personally-I felt like I was right back living in India myself.

Through Robert's writing- wonderful storytelling- (with both books)- is a template for a spiritual journey on which you meet different aspects of yourself and spirit.

"One of the Great mysteries of India, and the greatest of all it's joys, is the tender warmth of the lowest paid. The man wasn't angling for a tip: most of the man who use the washroom didn't give one. He was a simple kind man, in a place of essential requirement, giving me a genuinely kind smile, one human being to another".

"It's that kindness, from the deepest of the Indian heart, that the true flag of the nation, and the connection that brings you back to India again and again, or holds you there forever".

Wonderful!

Thank You to Grove Atlantic Publishing, Netgalley, and Gregory David Roberts,a *dazzling* ineffable joy!

Skip says

While I have to agree that this was not as good as GDR's *Shantaram*, I cannot see any reason for 3 stars. Personally, I think it deserves 4.5 stars, but not 5.

GDR's novels are very spiritual, and I would say that there was less story in *The Mountain Shadow* and more philosophy, which at times did read a little like Chinese fortune cookies. Some of the pithy quotes though were quite funny or memorable. As before, Lin/Shantaram is a criminal, making his money from forging documents and then by running an illegal money changing business; however, he has a huge heart. We find him adrift as the book opens, because the love of his life, Karla, has married a media magnate and aspiring politician. As in *Shantaram*, Lin assembles a wonderful list of friends from all walks of life and cultures, many are lost souls like himself: gangsters, street people, gurus, and even an heiress. There is much mayhem (and drug use) in the book, as the criminal underworld and police are constantly at war, and emotional highs and lows, as Lin's friends have extraordinary luck, both good and bad. I missed the slums, which were such a wonderful backdrop in the first book; however, the slums did provide an important safe haven. In the end, I think the message is a positive message about love, faith, religion, ethics, and the human spirit.

Sambasivan says

Having read Shantaram over a decade back, I was waiting for this sequel for quite a long time. And it has truly been worth the wait. The only other author who had a gap of over five years but came back with a bang was Greg Iles.

Linbaba aka Shantaram continues from where he left and covers the next few years in the same alleys of South Mumbai - the relentless and murky underworld that is scarcely visible to the ordinary dweller of Mumbai. One gets a real close view of the violent thinking as well as the day to day lives, the perennial gang wars, the drug addiction, shady deals, black market transactions et al, and what makes this an exclusive read is the authenticity an Australian writer has been able to achieve.

There are various struggles of the author, both internal as well as external, his exposition of the philosophy of love and the futility of hate, greed and violence - all of which are so inextricably linked with the narrative that one lives these lives alongside the author. That in itself is a monumental achievement.

A masterpiece without doubt!!!

Ralph Blackburn says

The Mountain Shadow by Gregory David Roberts- From an excerpt of this novel, I was able to determine that this sequel to Robert's first novel, Shantaram, is every bit as enjoyable. It is easy to get right into this story, with its colorful poetic prose and exotic backgrounds. Once again we find Lin(Lindsay) on the streets and backwaters of Bombay(Mumbai), associating with drug dealers, bandits and thieves. The story is told in such a dizzying style, like a stream-of-consciousness narrative that leaves you breathless at times, or turning back to make sure you understand what just happened. The characters- Naveen, the half-Indian, half-Irish Private Detective, Vikram, the old friend, Concannon, the ex-UVF mercenary, all are carefully splashed about the pages as they come to life. I'm looking forward to reading the complete novel when it comes out in October and can heartily recommend it to anyone who enjoys intrigue and adventure or just a good read.

Krista says

I cannot wait for this book to come out. I'm thinking it won't be released by the end of the month though. . .

Larnacouer de SH says

"Korku zincirli bir kurttur. Yaln?zca onu serbest b?rakt???n?zda tehlikeli olur. Hüzün unutu?ta tükenir. Tek bir gülümseyi? en amans?z öfkeyi bile öldürebilir. Sadece umut sonsuza dek var olur çünkü bize ait de?ildir. Umut atalar?m?zdan kalmad?r. Cesurca a?klar?yla bize içimizdeki iyili?i miras b?rakan ilk insanlardan.

Ve umut denen kadim tohum onu besleyen her kalbi onar?r. Bütün kalpler umudun bize tan?d??? seçeneklerle uyum içinde atar; geçmi?in gölgeleri ve yeni günün temiz ve parlak sayfalar? aras?nda."

//

?nsan bir kitab? ne kadar çok sevebilirse, o kadar çok seviyorum.

Hiç bitmesin doyumsuzlu?u, öte yandan iyiki bitti sevinci, kazand???m dostlar ve yitirdiklerimin hüznü. Ne diyece?imi bilemiyorum gerçekten.

Anupam Das says

I picked up The Mountain Shadow (TMS) with a lot of hope, because I loved Shantaram. But an artist can only ever have one masterpiece. And I think Greg Roberts had already made his, before he started writing TMS.

TMS has the following problems:

It's very long, without needing to be.

It's got some extremely weird philosophy about the meaning of life and complexity and love and the nature of evil. The problem with random philosophizing in a novel is that there will be no academic debate over it, and philosophy, when not debated on, is always the weaker for it. An example: "...Will, our human will, is in a constant state of superposition, interacting with, and not interacting with the spiritual tendency field, like the photons of light from which it's made".

It does not have the beautiful human moments that Shantaram did. Shantaram's best parts are when Roberts describes life in the slum. I'm not saying TMS should have had slum life. Obviously, it couldn't have. But the lack of those beautiful human stories makes TMS shallow.

Jacki (Julia Flyte) says

Like many others, I loved Shantaram, and so I approached this sequel with an equal mix of anticipation and trepidation. Could Gregory David Roberts repeat the magic? The short answer is no. This book isn't nearly as good as Shantaram, and worse, it has the potential to make Shantaram seem worse in retrospect. But having

said that, it's not a total disaster either. I read it in a week, and despite its near 900 page length, I never lost interest nor found it hard to stay with.

The Mountain Shadow is set two years after the events of Shantaram. Lin is still living in Bombay and working as a forger for his mentor Khaderbhai's mafia organisation, now run by Sanjay Kumar and known as the Sanjay Corporation. He is living with his girlfriend Lisa (I didn't remember her, but she was in the previous book towards the end), and while he still carries a torch for Karla, he hasn't seen her for two years, since she married Ranjit, an aspiring politician.

In the first 100 pages three key events happen. Lin meets an Irishman by the name of Concannon, he is kidnapped by a rival gang who want information about the Sanjay Corporation and his girlfriend Lisa tells him that she wants to see other people. These three things will set a train of events in motion that drive the remainder of the plot. Apart from brief forays to Sri Lanka and to a spiritual retreat, the action is set entirely in Bombay and many familiar characters will appear, among them Didier, Abdullah, Madame Zhou and Karla. As in the previous book, Bombay is itself a key character in the book, with all its corruption and chaos, millionaires, gangsters, holy men and slum dwellers.

This book is overwritten. It's full of flowery sentences like: "She was a river, not a stone, and every day was another curve in tomorrow's plain" or "Night is Truth wearing a purple dress, and people dance differently there". If it wasn't for the author's postscript telling us that he doesn't endorse drug taking, I would have sworn that he was stoned throughout the writing of this book. So many sentences read like the kind of thing you think is brilliant when you come up with them at 3am, but realise in the cold light of day that they are tripe. Where was the editor in this process, I wondered?

The characters all spend huge amounts of time smoking marijuana and exchanging dialogue that feels like it belongs in a fortune cookie, eg: "A heart filled with greed, pride or hateful feelings is not free" or "It's the things that make us one, that make us worth having" or "Money's a river: some of us go with the current and some of us paddle to the shore". It's these empty platitudes that take the place of character development. I've now read 1700 pages of Lin's adventures and I still couldn't really tell you what Karla is like. Too many characters can be summarised in pithy descriptors like "angry lesbian", "spoiled heiress", "free-spirited Aquarian" or "foul-tempered crusader" - they aren't real or rounded people.

And yet, for all these flaws, there's something likeable in these pages. I can't say with hand on heart that "you should read this", but it's not a write off either and it ends on a genuinely touching and uplifting note.
