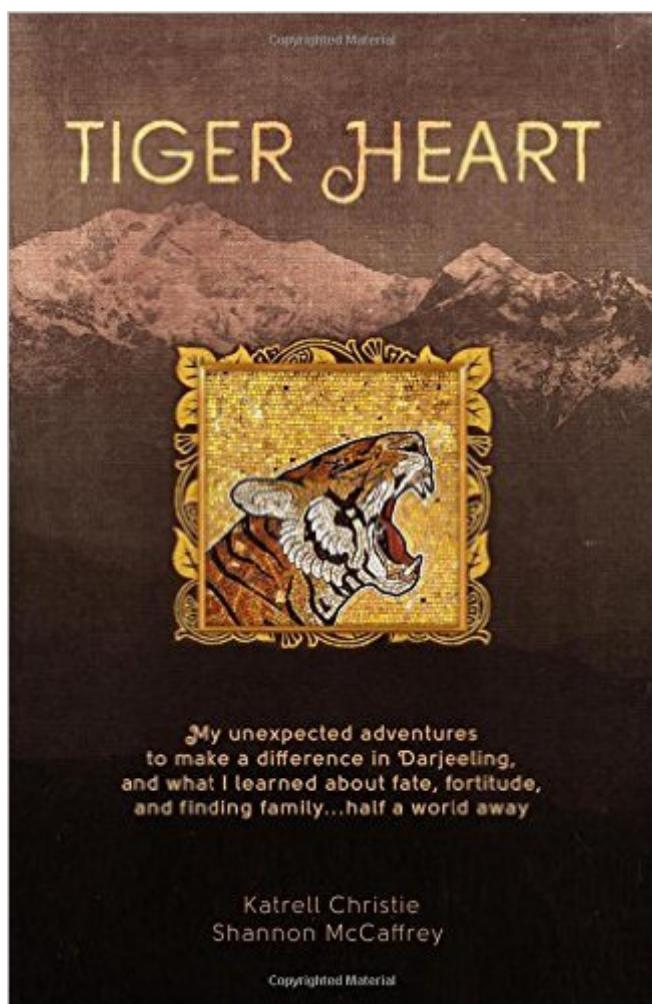


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Tiger Heart: My Unexpected Adventures To Make A Difference In Darjeeling, And What I Learned About Fate, Fortitude, And Finding Family Half A World Away



Synopsis

Katrell Christie was a thirty-something artist turned roller-derby rebel who opened a tea shop in Atlanta. Barely two years later, her life would make a drastic change--and so would the lives of a group of girls half a world away. I chose the name of my tea shop--Dr. Bombay's Underwater Tea Party--because it sounded whimsical. India wasn't part of the equation. Not even remotely. I didn't do yoga. I had no deep yearning to see the Taj Mahal or tour Hindu temples. Indian food? I could take it or leave it. Yet on a whim, Katrell did go. She witnessed the throngs at the Ganges River, toured the tea fields of Darjeeling, and helped string pearls in conservative Hyderabad. But it was in a crowded Buddhist orphanage where she crossed paths with some girls who would change the course of her life. One night we had a conversation about their futures. What did they hope to be when they grew up? They didn't have any answers. The fear that consumed them was leaving the orphanage. What would happen on the day they were asked to gather their things and leave--to walk out the door and be all alone on the street with no one to turn to and nowhere to go? With her mind racing about their grim futures, Katrell reached the simple conclusion that she couldn't walk away. So instead she walked forward--on a mission to help them in any small way. Once back at her shop, an idea for The Learning Tea was born. By selling tea, cupcakes, scones, and other treats, Katrell raised enough funds to provide life necessities for the girls--safe housing, uniforms, medical care, tutoring, and ultimately, a college education for each of them. To date, The Learning Tea has helped eleven young girls who once faced the bleakest of futures. Tiger Heart recounts Katrell's riveting adventures back to India, through the chaotic streets of Mumbai, to tiny villages with roadside tea huts and hot samosas, to elephant crossings and snow-capped mountain switchbacks of the Himalayas--an unexpected backdrop where she fell in love with a country that was gorgeous and heartbreakingly beautiful all at once, where tragedy, humor, resilience and kindness were inextricably bound. From dodging feral monkeys, to slamming shots of whiskey to win acceptance at a local Rotary Club, to forging lasting friendships with the people who stepped up to help her cause, Tiger Heart offers a shot-gun seat on an inspiring trek across the globe, capturing the essence of India: its quirks, its traditions, and its people. Fate may have led Katrell to a tiny spot on a map, but it was a kinship that brought her back home a half a world away. Tiger Heart is a life-affirming look at the ties that bind and the power of each of us to make a difference.

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Customer Reviews

“Whatever I do would barely scrape the surface. But is something better than nothing?”

Katrell Christie, Tiger HeartA little less than a year ago, I was researching various businesses that help combat human trafficking when I came across the Learning Tea. I tried to connect with the owner, Katrell Christie, but she was in India at the time, and unfortunately the connection faded into the background as I plunged into the world of magazine production. Sometime later, I was asked if I would like to review Tiger Heart, a book on Christie’s journey to help end human trafficking in India. Tiger Heart is about Katrell Christie’s life journey, which weaves its way throughout the text connecting her personal and philanthropic lives, often leaving her to wonder how she arrived in her current state. While she addresses many topics, her core is always the heart of her mission. Her purpose in India is wrapped around a group of young girls in a small town who are being pushed out of the orphanage because they are of age to leave. At 16 years of age, girls are unceremoniously pressed out onto the streets of India, where many find themselves in sexual slavery or domestic servitude. Christie’s safe house gives them the ability to finish their young years studying so they can find a decent job to support themselves and break the cycle of poverty. Among the topics she discusses includes her haphazard and reluctant way of “discovering” India; her shock on various issues such as trafficking and acid attacks; and her need to do what she could do to end the suffering. As her story unfolds, she talks about her struggles to secure a home for her girls, and candidly discusses her failures along with her successes, both in India and in the United States.

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