

The Year We Seized the Day: A True Story of Friendship and Renewal on the Camino

By Elizabeth Best, Colin Bowles

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The utterly compelling and inspirational account of how two very different writers tackle their demons walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the legendary medieval pilgrimage across Spain

Elizabeth Best had always wanted to go on a pilgrimage. Colin Bowles had never given it a moment's thought. But by a twist of fate the two barely acquainted writers seize the day and drop everything to retrace one of the oldest pilgrimage routes in the Western world, through the heart of Spain to Santiago de Compostela. It was meant to be a stroll in the sun, but they're under-prepared and carrying way too much baggage, in every sense. Bound by a promise and fueled by local vino, what starts out as a physical challenge—500 miles, give or take—quickly becomes an epic tale of tragedy, triumph, and fierce loyalty as a scenic walk through mystic lands gives rise to far greater personal journeys. Set amidst the olive groves, rolling hills, castles, and cathedrals of northern Spain and featuring a supporting cast of eccentrics—from mad monks to angry nuns, Lycra-clad cyclists, international soul seekers, and boisterous boy scouts, this is an inspiring, moving, and blackly funny account of two hapless pilgrims on an extraordinary journey to the end of the earth and beyond.

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Editorial Review

From Booklist
Starred Review They barely knew each other—Best a young writer just starting off and Bowles a middle-aged writer of several books. She suggests he accompany her on a 500-mile walk on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrimage on the Spanish coast to the tomb of St. James. They set off on a 36-day journey that will test them physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. They met fellow pilgrims of all nationalities, shape, sizes, and dispositions, from devout to flighty, and their hosts ranged from kind to exploitative—and then there was the screaming nun. Bowles was to be her rock, get her through the pilgrimage, but within weeks, his demons were roaring. Their alternating perspectives run the gamut from hilarious to tragic as they reveal more and more of themselves on a wrenching journey across endless wheat fields, forests, roadways, and small villages, suffering blisters, dehydration, fever, and murderous fights. This is more than a travelogue, though the beautiful scenery and intriguing history are here. This is a journey of self-examination, a tortured experience of friendship developed and strained to the breaking point, then repaired, as two individuals prepare themselves to resume life after the Camino. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"By any measure, this is a remarkable, painful, illuminating and inspiring book." —*Sydney Morning Herald*

About the Author

Elizabeth Best is the author of *Eli's Wings*. **Colin Bowles** is the author of more than 30 historical novels, including *When We Were Gods*, under the name Colin Falconer.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Martha Williams:

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Keith Kemp:

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