



## The Twenty: One Woman's Trek Across Corsica on the GR20 Trail

**Marianne Bohr**

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At sixty and retired, Marianne Bohr and her husband felt fit and ready for adventure. Thus, they planned to hike the famed, daunting Grande Randonnée 20. *The Twenty* covers their 124-mile trek along the spine of Corsica, which challenged Bohr and changed her life.

Eighteen thousand people attempt to cover the grueling GR20 each year, but less than fifty percent complete the walk. At seven thousand five hundred feet in altitude, the route is known as "Europe's most difficult trek." But it also features astounding landscapes—cavernous gorges, magical waterfalls, peaceful mountain lakes—and promises encounters with free-roaming farm animals. Traveling its desolate, scree-covered places, across narrow ledges, and facing near-vertical ascents, Bohr found it to be more a climbing adventure than a hike. And during it, she contended with a recent rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis that made her question her abilities. "If I keep my secret to myself, perhaps it will just disappear," she hoped.

Thoughts of mortality and the loss of vitality waft through Bohr's memoir. She weighed the decision of whether to take drugs for her pain against worries about her husband's vertigo and whether he could handle the altitude. And she wanted (and needed) to believe that their dreams were still within reach. Haunted by schoolyard taunts that she was no good, she had a compulsive, stubborn need to prove herself, and it put her marriage at risk. Then a serious injury put her on three days of rest while her group carried on. In intimate, moving prose, Bohr shares how that solitary time led to personal reflection, enabled her to confront her past, and readied her make serious choices about her future.

Covering a perilous hike on a difficult European trail, *The Twenty* is the account of a quest to heal childhood wounds and stop striving for perfection.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2023)

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