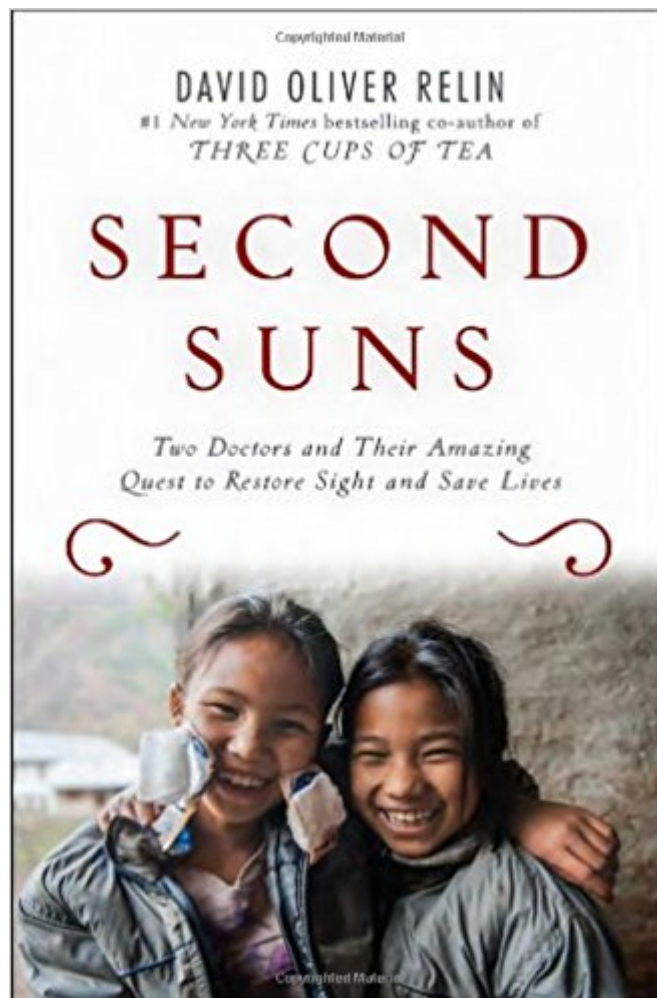


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Second Suns: Two Doctors And Their Amazing Quest To Restore Sight And Save Lives



Synopsis

From the co-author of *Three Cups of Tea* comes the inspiring story of two very different doctors—one from the United States, the other from Nepal—united in a common mission: to rid the world of preventable blindness. In this transporting book, David Oliver Relin shines a light on the work of Geoffrey Tabin and Sanduk Ruit, gifted ophthalmologists who have dedicated their lives to restoring sight to some of the world's most isolated, impoverished people through the Himalayan Cataract Project, an organization they founded in 1995. Tabin was the high-achieving bad boy of Harvard Medical School, an accomplished mountain climber and adrenaline junkie as brilliant as he was unconventional. Ruit grew up in a remote Nepalese village, where he became intimately acquainted with the human costs of inadequate access to health care. Together they found their life's calling: tending to the afflicted people of the Himalayas, a vast mountainous region with an alarmingly high incidence of cataract blindness. *Second Suns* takes us from improvised plywood operating tables in villages without electricity or plumbing to state-of-the-art surgical centers at major American universities where these two driven men are restoring sight and hope to patients from around the world. With their revolutionary, inexpensive style of surgery, Tabin and Ruit have been able to cure tens of thousands—all for about twenty dollars per operation. David Oliver Relin brings the doctors' work to vivid life through poignant portraits of patients helped by the surgery, from old men who cannot walk treacherous mountain trails unaided to cataract-stricken children who have not seen their mothers' faces for years. With the dexterity of a master storyteller, Relin shows the profound emotional and practical impact that these operations have had on patients' lives. *Second Suns* is the moving, unforgettable story of how two men with a shared dream are changing the world, one pair of eyes at a time. Praise for *Second Suns* "As miracles go, it's hard to beat making the blind see. Yet that's exactly what the eye surgeon Dr. Geoffrey Tabin can do. He services poor people in the developing world who have developed cataracts—a clouding of the lens of the eye that is the world's leading cause of blindness. . . . *Second Suns* is a hopeful work, a profile of two doctors who have dedicated their lives to bringing light to those in darkness." —*Time* "A compelling and inspiring book . . . *Second Suns* portrays heroic health care delivered under harrowing conditions: Ruit and his teams carry their equipment on multi-day treks up steep mountain trails, sometimes hiking at night with flashlights or head lamps, to reach settlements where they typically spend several days operating on hundreds of villagers in makeshift surgical theaters." —*The Washington Post* "Second Suns should be required reading for anybody with an interest in humanitarian philanthropy—or, for that matter, a desire to feel a little better about the world." —*Outside* "A detailed, heartfelt account of the work of [two]

dedicated pioneers.â•â”Kirkus Reviews

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Customer Reviews

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David Oliver Relin is the co-author of the #1 New York Times bestseller Three Cups of Tea, which has been translated into more than two dozen languages. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the Kiriya Prize and a James A. Michener Fellowship. He died in November 2012.

I am stunned to read some comments that the book was "too long" or contained "too much information". I was blown away by every aspect of this book and fascinated by the main characters. The courage, dedication, integrity, vision... there are no words to describe how these heroes have accomplished what they have managed to do. The dire poverty of Dr. Ruit was instrumental to the plot. The poorest of the poor in the most remote area of the world becomes a doctor and cures tens of thousands of blind, poor inhabitants of the region. Wouldn't you want to know how that happened and what makes him tick?? I did! And Dr. Tabin, a brilliant, kind of rebel and adventure-seeking mountain climbing, Harvard and Yale student is so moved by what he sees, he dedicates his life to the same goal. Again, his background, incredible energy, talent, all filter in to how he becomes the hero he is. I think folks are too used to instant gratification and have lost the ability to focus for more than 10 minutes. Relin's writing is pure poetry as he paints a moving and thoughtful portrait of all concerned. And as far as the controversy with Relin's prior book - it did NOT involve him personally. He was writing a biography and the subject lied and exaggerated certain aspects of himself to Relin. So there was NO shame on Relin's part... he was lied to. Relin's writing is and was, superb.

Sadly enough, my father (a lifelong liberal who wrote about Civil Rights in America) took his own life while I was in the process of reading this book. I felt great sadness knowing David Oliver Relin let the bait of taunters and condemners take him down, and I am praying for him (it's never too late for God since He is the Master of time). I have been tempted by such thoughts in my life but mainly for feeling useless in a world where so many are suffering. My father's name is David, too, and these suicides put it on my heart to pray a lot and change careers when the answer came: back to nursing school! Yes, with God all things are possible and it's never too late. I am grateful that this book fell into my hands at the right time. The night is darkest before the dawn, my friends. There are so many people, and many whom I have lately surrounded myself with, who proudly wear religious labels (oh, I've done it, too, but oh how empty are words and theology). Although we are not saved by works, it is abundantly clear when some men have God in their hearts and are inspired to help "the least of these" because of that. Geoff Tabin and Sanduk Ruit are two men inspired by the two commandments on which the others "hang," in my humble opinion. Those who have a heart for the "least of these," God will have a heart for, too. Bless you both and all who help in your endeavors, and maybe when I have my nursing degree, I'll be on the front lines with you, fighting to cure all curable and preventable blindness!!

I've spent the last 21 years in eye care, currently as a Certified Ophthalmic Technician. I was not prepared for the personal and professional emotions this story brought forth. To the non medical, non ophthalmic reader, this story will move you. As an eye care professional, it will inspire, humble and leave you in tears. You'll think back to that patient that you impacted greatly, and the one that you didn't reach in time. You'll want to dig deeper to make your impact even greater. If not, it's time to move from patient care. 135 million people in the world are blind. 3 out of every 4 could be cured with a 10 minute, \$25 surgery.

Having recently undergone cataract surgery, I was surfing the internet for a charity that performs these amazing operations, when I came across the Himalayan Cataract Project. That led me to this wonderful book. Dr. Sanduk Ruit, born on the wrong side of the tracks in Nepal (where caste matters), decided to go to medical school after several of his young siblings died needless deaths. He went on to become one of the preeminent ophthalmologists in the world. If he shouldn't get the Nobel prize in medicine, I don't know who should. There are millions of poor people who have cataract blindness and could be cured with an operation that takes 10 minutes. He and his partner, Dr. Geoff Tabin of the U.S., care deeply about that, and have made it their life's work to bring cataract surgery to as many people as possible in Asia and Africa. Just as importantly, the Himalayan Cataract Project trains doctors from all over the world to spread their knowledge. What an uplifting, inspiring book. There really are some wonderful, amazing people in the world, people whose only dream is help others. I can't put this book down, and will be sorry when it ends.

This is an amazing narrative about two physicians from vastly different backgrounds who came together with a common purpose of bringing eye care to those populations living in regions with the highest levels of blindness or various other eye problems exacerbated by impoverishment. What is truly remarkable is the way in which these gifted doctors could identify technologies and treatment strategies that have been proven to rival the best methods used in affluent countries. It gives one pause to think what could be done worldwide if our focus would be on healing and prevention rather than on profit. Another valuable insight is the way in which they inspire other doctors to replicate their methods and to join their endeavor along with seeking donors who could demonstrably see the results of this approach so that many thousands of people living in Asia and Africa will benefit from life-changing treatment.

I highly recommend this book. It tells the story of two amazing, tireless doctors and their equally

dedicated staff who are helping to eradicate blindness that is treatable in third world countries. It makes you realize how each of us can change the world one person at a time.

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