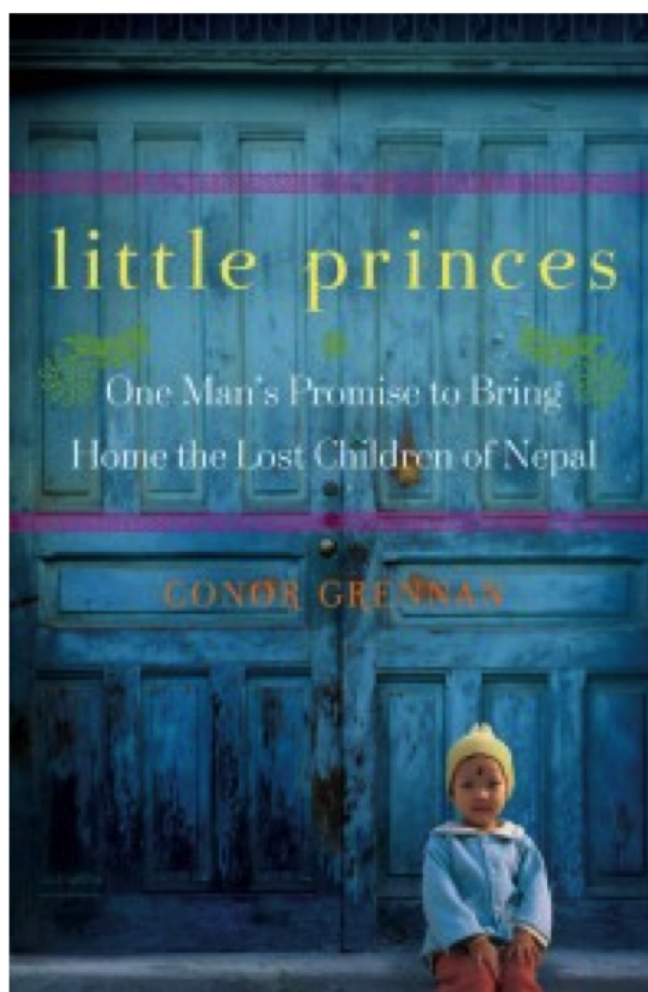


Author Conor Grennan Talks 'Little Princes'



By Tanni Deb

Could you ever imagine falling in love with someone you've

never met face to face? For Conor Grennan, the author of *Little Princes*, that's exactly what happened. Leaving his job to travel the world, Grennan decided to volunteer at an orphanage in Nepal, figuring it would be a great pickup line with women. During his experience, he discovered that the children of the orphanage weren't actually orphans; they were abandoned by child traffickers after they had fooled the children's parents into paying large sums of money for their safety. During Grennan's adventure, not only does he end up finding the love of his life, but he also falls in love with the children and commits to reuniting them with their families.

This story has been covered internationally and Cupid recently had a chance to interview Grennan about his book. Take a look at what he had to say:

You spent eight years working at the EastWest Institute (EWI) in Prague and the EU Office in Brussels. Why did you decide to leave your job, and specifically, volunteer in Nepal?

I loved working at EWI, but after eight years I really needed some kind of change. So I figured, maybe it was time to move on and head home to the US. What better way than to first go on a long trip around the world? I would get all the traveling out of my system. I had saved up enough money for it, and I felt like this was a great way to spend it.

As for volunteering in Nepal, I wanted to appear impressive to girls, and saying, "I'm volunteering in an orphanage in Nepal" seemed like a pretty great pick up line! It's embarrassing to think about it now, of course, but that was pretty much my initial plan – it's about as self-centered as you can get, I admit!

You kept a notebook with you the entire time you were in Nepal, where you recorded conversations and events. What made you do this? Did you know you wanted to write a book?

I always loved to write, and when I started traveling I started keeping a blog. Writing things down had always come naturally. I had kept a journal for many years. I wanted to remember the details so I could tell the stories on my blog. I didn't just do it in Nepal, I did it everywhere – but in Nepal, the conversations with the kids were so funny that I kept a close track of them. But I never had any intention of writing a book.

***Little Princes* is not only about your journey in Nepal, but also your love for the children there and your wife, Liz, who you met while volunteering. How exactly did you both meet? Did you ever think you'd meet your wife while volunteering?**

Liz and I met over email initially. She wrote to me because she was going out to India to volunteer over Christmas, and she'd read a small article in a local paper about what I was doing in Nepal. She thought I might be connected to some organization in India, and thought maybe I'd have some advice. I didn't, but I wrote back to her, and we just sort of started this email friendship for several months. But no, I never thought I'd meet my wife volunteering, so many thousands of miles from home!

What are you and Liz currently working on to stop child trafficking in Nepal?

Liz and I are both on the board of Next Generation Nepal. She has been to Nepal many times, and knows the children and their plight intimately. Together we help guide the strategy of the organization. Our team on the ground in Nepal works hard to find the families of hundreds and thousands of trafficked children. We also prevent trafficking at the source, by working on village development projects (such as education) to make sure families know that they are not alone and that they don't have to take such risks with their children.

Do you think your relationship with Liz is different from past

romantic relationships because of how you met?

Oh, absolutely. We talk about that a lot. Liz and I met, not in a bar or on a first date, but by writing to each other. We learned so much about each other before we even met in person for the first time, three months later. It gave us a wonderful window into the other person's heart, without all the pressure of that first date. I also knew right away that she was a deeply compassionate woman (besides intelligent, beautiful, and hilarious), and that was probably what first attracted me to her.

What is the most important lesson you've learned through your experience in Nepal?

There are so many, but I think the biggest is that having a cause can bring you the most joy of anything in life. It sounds corny, but it's true. I was only ever concerned with myself and my own life – when I found these kids who needed help, it gave my life a purpose I never expected. The fact that I could do this work together with my wife has been a dream come true.

What do you think this experience has taught you about relationships in general?

It definitely taught me to look beneath the surface. Liz and I weren't face to face when we met, so all we could go on was what the other person's values were and what they were really like on the inside. I always knew that I put a great deal of emphasis on the superficial aspects of a person – their looks, their job, their friends, their life, etc – and with Liz, I didn't have any of that. I just got to know the real her. If we can find a way to look beyond the superficial, we can find out if that's a person we are meant to be with. I think the best way of doing it is writing back and forth; it opens the window into a person's heart. We also found that we could be honest with each other so easily. It was a perfect foundation

on which to build a relationship.

Cupid thanks Conor Grennan for his time! To find out more about his amazing adventure, visit Amazon to purchase *Little Princes*. For more information on Grennan, his book and the organization he founded, Next Generation Nepal, visit his website, [Conor Grennan](#).