



# THE TRAIL ORGANISER

ARJUN MAJUMDAR

**M**ountains are great places to fall in love! For a small moment in time, mountains have the power to bring two people together where it's just them—enjoying each other's company and discovering a person they never knew.

One of our winter programmes was the first trek for Jayanti, a quiet girl. In the wondrous winter of Himachal Pradesh, with dollops of snow on the roof tops and the pine trees, Jayanti quietly went about her trek, almost unnoticed, slipping and falling occasionally. Shankar, her trek leader, didn't fail to notice. Every time she slipped, he'd magically appear by her side, guiding her through the difficult patch. For the first time in her life, Jayanti felt someone was looking after her.

Every time Shankar helped her, he would linger a while longer, talking to her. Jayanti told him stories about her life, her difficult upbringing and how she'd found new foster parents. She bared her soul to him, pouring out her stories as if these moments would never come again. Shankar listened to her intensely, continued to help her with her trek and, as everyone began to notice, was spending more and more time with her.

Both were distraught when the programme came to an end. Jayanti didn't know if she'd ever see Shankar again. They had spoken and shared a lot, but not their feelings for each other. As I headed out of Manali in the same bus as Jayanti's, I noticed her forlorn look—she stared out with an emptiness that had filled her world. I didn't see this as a sad ending.

The mountains had brought life to two people briefly. It had given them moments they'd cherish forever. Perhaps they

would find a way to take things forward. The mountains can bring even the oddest people together, such is their magnetism. The mountains have an ability to lay bare everything that comes in the way. Be it status, backgrounds, faiths, social scrutiny. Somehow, it just seems to happen.

Another trekker, Anahita, was married with two grown children when she ran into Akash on a trek in Uttarakhand. Akash, for his part, had just gotten married but was still settling into it. On the trek, they struck up an easy camaraderie. Both of them

discussed their respective marriages—Akash had more questions than stories to tell. They spent quite some time talking and I watched from a distance as a wonderful friendship blossomed. It did not border on romance, but it was perfectly normal for them to bond in the mountains of Uttarakhand. They may or may not have stayed in touch when the trek got over, but both of them shared a friendship that was warm.

The sense of attraction in the mountains is something to look out for, and it doesn't have to be limited to a romantic bond. It can engage

you in a whole trove of emotions. Yes, it could be momentary, or it could last a while. Yes, it may not have a movie-like happy ending. But you can actually end up making friends for life, creating your own close group, and even finding your soulmate. Indeed, if anyone were to ask me for a reason to start trekking, I would have to say that the chance of falling in love is as big a reason as any! **D**

Arjun is the founder of Indiahikes, a blogger and an experienced trekker. He takes a keen interest in training youngsters to appreciate our trails.

THE MOUNTAINS HAVE  
THE POWER TO BRING  
EVEN THE ODDEST  
PEOPLE TOGETHER.  
THEY HAVE THE  
ABILITY TO LAY BARE  
EVERYTHING THAT  
COMES IN THE WAY AND  
ALLOW A RE-DISCOVERY