

Her tall tale is all true

By Mia Geiger Special to The Denver Post

Wherever she goes, Arianne Cohen knows “the question” is coming. Whether it’s the cashier at the local burrito shop or strangers on the street, invariably someone will look up and ask: “How tall are you?” It goes with the territory of being a 6-foot, 3-inch woman.

But now, when someone asks, she can hold up the cover of “The Tall Book: A Celebration of Life on High.” After her name is her height.

“On a book about the experience of height, it’s the book-cover equivalent of putting ‘Ph.D.’,” the 29-year-old journalist said.

The book offers up little-known facts on the topic. Cohen, a Harvard graduate, culled research and spoke with experts and other tall people to find out if “talls” really are different — such as whether they make more money than their shorter counterparts, have higher IQs or have an advantage in dating.

She also reveals her own struggles and successes with her height, from slouching at school dances to elation at discovering a Tall Girl Shop.

The book came about from a desire, particularly as a child, to know more about being tall.

“It was very awkward to be the tallest girl around, and nobody really wanted to talk about it,” she said. “I would go to the library, and there was no book on the topic. If you talk to sociologists and psychologists they’ll tell you being tall is like any other trait — having freckles, or having red hair or any other very visual trait.

“Really it’s not, because to be tall is to be public. You have this very different, very visible trait that you can never hide, ever, for your entire life, which has its pros and cons, but I felt it was really important to talk about it honestly.”

The freelance magazine writer who divides her time between Portland, Ore., and New York, got the go-ahead for the

book a few years back. “This was the easiest literary project I’ve ever sold in my entire life,” she said. “I would walk in, and they would be like, ‘OK, she knows what she’s talking about.’”

While her height has proved challenging at times, it’s also shaped who she is. She gravitated toward activities where height is an advantage. She played basketball (“Rather than explaining over and over again why you don’t play basketball, it’s easier to just play basketball.”), performed in dance and became a national-level swimmer (“On a pool deck, there’s nothing but positive things to say about a tall girl”).

The three years of researching and writing the book had an unexpected bonus. She now is better able to deal with situations like not long ago, when, while walking with a friend on a New York street, a guy yelled out to her, “Hey, you look like a dude!” She was wearing a dress and had her hair down.

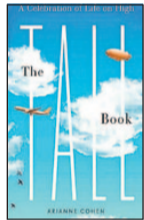
“It took me a while to understand that when people make comments about your height, they’re really expressing their own issues,” Cohen said. “That’s really key, and I didn’t realize that until I interviewed a bunch of people and looked at it so closely.

“So when someone says, ‘Hey, you look like a dude,’ they’re saying, ‘I’m uncomfortable with people who are taller than I am.’ It has nothing to do with you, nothing. It has nothing to do with your looks, your self-esteem, your image or anything. That was a late-stage breakthrough for me.”

She’s spreading the word during a book tour, speaking engagements, and a website in progress called tallbook.com.

“I call it an online tall party. I really just wanted to build a place where people can come together and get information and know they’re not the only tall person out there.”

Mia Geiger is a freelance writer in the Philadelphia area.



NONFICTION
The Tall Book: A Celebration of Life on High,
by Arianne Cohen, \$20

LocalBestSellers

The Denver area’s best-selling books, according to information from the Tattered Cover Book Store, Barnes & Noble in Greenwood Village, the Boulder Book Store and Borders Books in Lone Tree.

FICTION

- Finger Lickin’ Fifteen,** by Janet Evanovich, \$27.95
- In the Kitchen,** by Monica Ali, \$26.99
- The Angel’s Game,** by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, \$26.95
- Naamah’s Kiss,** by Jacqueline Carey, \$26.99
- The Doomsday Key,** by James Rollins, \$27.99
- Hothouse Flower and the Nine Plants of Desire,** by Margot Berwin, \$24
- Below Zero,** by C.J. Box, \$24.95
- The Help,** by Kathryn Stockett, \$24.95
- B Is for Beer,** by Tom Robbins, \$17.95
- Shanghai Girls,** by Lisa See, \$25

NONFICTION

- Colorado Classique: A Collection of Fresh Recipes From the Rockies,** by Junior League of Denver, \$29.95
- Outliers: The Story of Success,** by Malcolm Gladwell, \$27.99
- Smaldone: The Untold Story of an American Crime Family,** by Dick Kreck, \$24.95
- How to Win a Cosmic War: God, Globalization, and the End of the War on Terror,** by Reza Aslan \$26
- Kennedy Legacy: Jack, Bobby and Ted and a Family Dream Fulfilled,** by Vincent Bzdek, \$26.95

- Catastrophe,** by Dick Morris and Eileen McGann, \$26.99
- Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto,** by Mark R. Levin, \$25
- Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Super Athletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen,** by Christopher McDougall, \$24.95
- Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of U.S. Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan,** by Doug Stanton, \$28
- The End of Overeating,** by David A. Kessler, \$25.95

FICTION PAPERBACK

- The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society,** by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, \$14
- The Art of Racing in the Rain,** by Garth Stein, \$14.99
- Olive Kitteridge,** by Elizabeth Strout, \$14
- The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo,** by Stieg Larsson, \$14.95
- The Elegance of the Hedgehog,** by Muriel Barbery, \$15

NONFICTION PAPERBACK

- Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace ... One School at a Time,** by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, \$15
- In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto,** by Michael Pollan, \$15
- When You Are Engulfed in Flames,** by David Sedaris, \$15.99
- The Omnivore’s Dilemma,** by Michael Pollan, \$16
- No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam,** by Reza Aslan, \$14.95

NationalBestSellers

The New York Times listings are based on sales at 3,985 bookstores and wholesalers with 50,000 retail outlets for the week ended June 20.

FICTION

- Knockout,** by Catherine Coulter, \$26.95.
- The Bourne Deception,** by Eric Van Lustbader, \$27.99
- The Angel’s Game,** by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, \$26.95
- Relentless,** by Dean Koontz, \$27
- The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane,** by Katherine Howe, \$25.99
- The Scarecrow,** by Michael Connelly, \$27.99
- Medusa,** by Clive Cussler and Paul Kemprecos, \$27.95
- Shanghai Girls,** by Lisa See, \$25
- The Neighbor,** by Lisa Gardner, \$25
- Gone Tomorrow,** by Lee Child, \$27

NONFICTION

- Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto,** by Mark R. Levin, \$25
- Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of U.S. Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan,** by Doug Stanton, \$28
- Outliers: The Story of Success,** by Malcolm Gladwell, \$27.99
- A Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity,** by Bill O’Reilly, \$26
- Renegade: The Making of a President,** by Richard Wolffe, \$26
- Home Game: An Accidental Guide to Fatherhood,** by Michael Lewis, \$23.95
- The Last Best Hope,** by Joe Scarborough, \$26
- Are You Kidding Me?** by Rocco Mediate and John Feinstein, \$26.99
- The Yankee Years,** by Joe Torre and Tom Verducci, \$26.95
- Crazy for the Storm,** by Norman Ollestad, \$25.99

TRADE FICTION PAPERBACK

- The Shack,** by William P. Young, \$14.99
- My Sister’s Keeper,** by Jodi Picoult, \$14
- The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society,** by Mary Ann Shaffer, \$14
- Pride and Prejudice and Zombies,** by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith, \$12.95
- The Art of Racing in the Rain,** by Garth Stein, \$14.99
- Olive Kitteridge,** by Elizabeth Strout, \$14
- Vision in White,** by Nora Roberts, \$16
- The Alchemist,** by Paulo Coelho, \$13.95
- Sarah’s Key,** by Tatiana de Rosnay, \$13.95
- A Summer Affair,** by Elin Hilderbrand, \$14.99

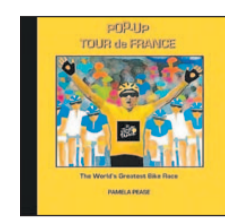
NONFICTION PAPERBACK

- Glenn Beck’s “Common Sense,”** by Glenn Beck, \$11.99
- Three Cups of Tea,** by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, \$15
- When You Are Engulfed in Flames,** by David Sedaris, \$15.99
- An Inconvenient Book,** by Glenn Beck, \$19.99
- Blink,** by Malcolm Gladwell, \$15.99
- Too Fat to Fish,** by Artie Lange with Anthony Bozza, \$16
- American Lion,** by Jon Meacham, \$18
- Liberal Fascism,** by Jonah Goldberg, \$17
- In Defense of Food,** by Michael Pollan, \$15
- I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell,** by Tucker Max, \$12.95

Children’sFiction

by Claire Martin

Pop-Up Tour de France: The World’s Greatest Bike Race,



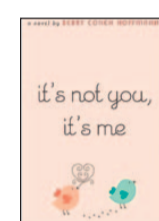
\$36. This brilliant bit of paper engineering makes a terrific and timely gift for avid cyclists. Pease retrieves fascinating minutiae about the world’s

most famous bicycle race.

Did you know that on Bastille Day (July 14), a French rider customarily wins the stage race, more or less by a common tacit agreement? Or that if a race passes through a rider’s home village, he’s allowed to ride ahead of the pack to greet family and friends?

Pease’s pop-ups range from a clever parade illustrating how bicycles evolved through time to a fold-out triptych of the central Paris scene on the final day. Marketed as a children’s book, it’s really more appropriate for cycle-crazy older readers.

It’s Not You, It’s Me,



Most of us harbor a sad, permanent crack, an unwanted souvenir left by someone who suddenly stopped returning our fierce love. Hoffman’s spare, heartfelt story maps the devastated terrain of an awkward, unexpected breakup and its inevitable, semi-psychotic aftermath.

Zoe is the kind of girlfriend who keeps track of how many kisses she’s exchanged with Henry, with whom she is profoundly besotted. As she details each shard of her post-breakup life, she revisits tender scenes from the halcyon period she’s determined to resurrect. Ages 12 and up.

Mare’s War,



This muscular novel chronicles the coming-of-age episodes of two generations. Teenage sisters Octavia and Tali initially dread the summer road trip with their eccentric grandmother, Mare. But as Mare tells the girls about her experiences as a willful young soldier in the Women’s Army

Corps, her granddaughters undergo an epiphany.

And it’s a pretty realistic epiphany, with mood swings and snarky remarks on all sides. The girls make some bad decisions, and so does Mare. By the time they reach their destination, they’ve ascended to a new comprehension of what seemed irreconcilably alien at the journey’s outset. Ages 12 and up.

Locked Garden,



by Gloria Whelan, \$15.99. Sisters Verna and Carlie accompany their newly widowed physician father, along with their formidable aunt, when he’s assigned to a residential job at an asylum for the mentally ill. It is 1900, a time kinder to people with depression and mania than previous eras, but certainly not enlightened.

When a patient, Eleanor, becomes their housekeeper, the girls become fast friends with her. She’s engaging and hugely preferable to their clingy scold of an aunt.

By illustrating the progress, and then the decline, of a woman struggling with clinical depression, Whelan demystifies one of the most common mental disorders, breaking it into something comprehensible. And by shifting the spotlight to the girls’ controlling aunt, Whelan also invites readers to ponder the width of the line between the mentally well and the mentally ill. Ages 8 to 12.

The Beef Princess of Practical County,



by Michelle Houts, \$16.99. It’s almost county fair time, as countless aspiring young farmers and ranchers know, and they’ll see themselves in Libby Ryan, the protagonist of Houts’ lively novel. She and her grandfather are raising two promising steers for the Practical County Fair in

Nowhere, Ind. (Naming places is not the author’s strong suit.) Both are contenders for the grand-champion prize that Libby covets, leaning a little more toward one steer than the other.

Libby is less enthusiastic about being persuaded to enter a county fair beauty pageant. She prefers blue jeans to ball gowns and the company of her steers to that of prissy pageant veterans. How both contests end up is not quite as predictable as it seems. Ages 10 and up.