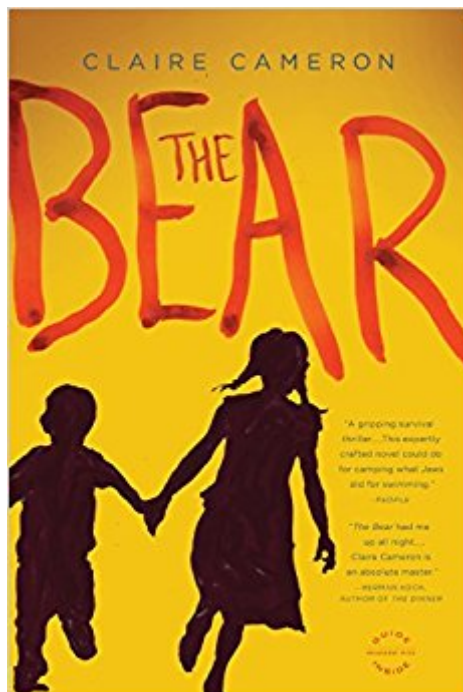


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The Bear: A Novel



Synopsis

A young girl who must fend for herself and her little brother after a brutal bear attack in this "emotional tour de force" (Megan Abbott) While camping with her family on a remote island, five-year-old Anna awakes in the night to the sound of screaming. A rogue black bear has entered the family's campsite and is attacking her parents. At her dying mother's urging, Anna manages to get her brother into the family's canoe and paddle away. But when the canoe runs aground on the edge of the woods, the sister and brother must battle hunger, the elements, and a wilderness alive with danger. Lost and completely alone, they find that their only hope resides in Anna's struggle to be brave when nothing in her world seems safe anymore. Told in the innocent voice of a child, *THE BEAR* is a transporting tale about love, loss, and the raw instincts that enable us to survive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When a young couple in Canada's Algonquin Park gets mauled and partially eaten by a black bear in 1991, it's a tragedy. When Cameron, who once worked at the park, researches and decides to write about this true story but adds the kids, it's a novel. In *The Bear*, the protagonist is a five-year-old girl, Anna, who must, after her parents are attacked, save herself and the life of her two-year-old brother, Stick, by canoeing to the mainland and surviving days in the wilderness—a harrowing time she shares with the reader in a sort of youngster stream of consciousness: If I threw a ball into the water he would not jump off a dock just wag wag wag. There's touchingly voiced courageousness here and, with her sibling, talk of poo as

well as the occasional, implausible preschooler sentiment: I need a fire inside my bones. From the conception to the execution, the book is an exploration of anguish from a child's point of view, shaded and shaped by Cameron (The Line Painter, 2007). --Eloise Kinney --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

PRAISE FOR THE BEAR: "[A] gripping survival thriller...Cameron unspools the adventure in Anna's twitchy voice, heightening the tension...This agonizing odyssey of loss and being lost also has humor...The book's anguished yet hopeful ending provides a touching terminus...This expertly crafted novel could do for camping what Jaws did for swimming."--Richard Eisenberg, People "A page turner...The Bear creates suspense out of the gap between what Anna knows and what the reader suspects...The story is laced with humor and moments of joy and triumph as well as fear and sorrow...Anna is such a compelling character...So gripping that it is hard to put the novel down."--Margaret Quamme, The Columbus Dispatch "The novel, written in the honest and unfiltered voice of the young girl, is a compact, tense survival story...A thoughtful take on change and fear, and the strength we find within ourselves."--Jon Foro, Omnivoracious "A vividly portrayed wilderness ordeal (poison ivy, hunger, rain, isolation) juxtaposed with glimpses of the inner resources young Anna draws upon (imagination, family, memory, hope), all seen through the eyes of a child who can express, if not entirely understand, her own resentment and protectiveness of her brother, her love and longing for her parents, her fear and empathy for the predator, and her determination to persevere...Uplifting."--Publishers Weekly, "Pick of the Week" "[An] adventure with a narration that nicely captures an ordinary child's way of thinking-and of blocking out unwelcome knowledge. [A] slam-bang opening...Scary...Darkly funny...A touching epilogue...Harrowing but ultimately hopeful."--Kirkus Reviews "An emotional tour de force. Claire Cameron's The Bear offers us an unforgettable child narrator who propels us through a story as unsettling as it is bone-chilling, and as suspenseful as it is moving."--Megan Abbott, author of Dare Me "The Bear is a taut and touching story of how a child's love and denial become survival skills. Claire Cameron takes a fairytale situation of children pitted against the wilderness, removes the fairies, and adds a terrifying and ravenous bear. I devoured this wonderful new novel in one day."--Charlotte Rogan, author of the national bestseller The Lifeboat "Claire Cameron has written a chilling, beautiful, voice-driven novel, one that will turn your blood cold, make you laugh, and remind you of all the ways you are human. Most importantly she honors the complexity of our relationship with nature, the ways we are humbled by it and tethered to it. A vivid, potent, and unforgettable novel."--Megan Mayhew Bergman, author of Birds of a Lesser Paradise "Claire Cameron plunges us in to the dark terrors of

the wilderness. The Bear is a survival story that is heart-pounding and moving. I devoured this book."--Tanis Rideout, author of *Above All Things*"The Bear faultlessly captures the wonder, bewilderment, fear and self-centeredness of five-year-old Anna, and beautifully balances the darkness of her tale with a hopeful, sensitively told back story and moments when she grasps her situation with just enough clarity to shoulder her burden."--Cathy Marie Buchanan, author of *The Painted Girls*"Thrilling and harrowing...I couldn't put this book down. And I must say that the ending was so right, I caught myself holding my breath. A remarkable novel."--Anthony De Sa, author of *Kicking the Sky*"Harrowing suspense. The Bear is a survival thriller that is told from a child's-eye point-of-view, which is not only convincing but doubles the tension. A heartbreaking, white-knuckle read."--Andrew Pyper, author of *The Demonologist*"The Bear is a harrowing and endlessly hopeful novel-an unforgettable hymn to the legacy of familial love. Claire Cameron is alive to mind of the child. Her assured evocation of soon-to-be-six-year-old Anna hits all the right notes: the connective web of association and analogy; the permeable skin between truth and story; the immersive experience of time. This is subtle magic-the transportive spell of a pitch-perfect narrative voice. We witness the unfolding of events through Anna's eyes while simultaneously watching over her small shoulder, hearts in our mouths. The Bear is no fable, gentle reader. A source of terror and lonely solace, Cameron's fur-clad villain threatens from without and from within. Like our unwilling heroine, we must be very, very brave."--Alissa York, author of *Fauna*

I read a lot of reviews of this book stating that it was "mesmerizing" "addictive" "edge of your seat", I bought it because of these reviews. I just didn't see what the fuss was about. I am someone who starts a book and finishes it, even if I have to skim the pages. I couldn't wait to get through it. It is written with the idea of a five or six year old girl telling the story of the devastation a black bear did to her family during a camping trip and how she and her brother survived. I have a six year old granddaughter and I don't think she would ever get confused between a large black bear and a dog. Feel bad, wanted to like, just didn't.

Enjoyed this novel except for the fact that my children at that age would have known the situation they were in from the beginning. Children are a little smarter then shown. For instance, my children a boy and girl are 20 months apart in age. The girl being the oldest. When she was almost three and our son almost 2 our son ate some toxic cedar tree berries. Our daughter was smart enough to tell me he had them in his mouth so that I could call poison control to see if they were dangerous to eat. She knew that though birds eat things outside it doesn't mean people can. I found this novel too

unrealistic at times.

This book was not in the least what I expected. I love 'bears' and have a rather large collection. I also write stories about them - thus my eagerness to read the book. I finished it the other day - looking to see if I could find something I understood. I am sure there is symbolism in it somewhere, but I could not find it. Maybe I need to read it again to get the main gist of what the book is about. It seemed as though I was reading the same thing over and over - the parents separated, mother and Anna Bear and Stick, not sure where father was, after he found safety for Anna, Stick and Gwen. Was he at the cottage? Was the danger real? Was it a real bear attack in the night (or was the bear an angry human? The next day mamma ordered them into the boat, row out to the middle and stay there. She was obviously dying unless she received immediate help; I don't understand the dream. I became weary of hearing about Stick's poop. I could not find the resolution. If I'd seen the picture on the cover of the girl with pony tail and the little boy holding her hand it may have helped. I will read it again and see if I gain better insight.

I kept reading but skipped over a lot of flashbacks and musings. Although it's been a long time since I was a child, I can not imagine thinking quite this simplistically. I think even a five or six year old would not have such trite interpretations of things. What child of that age doesn't know the difference between a dog and a bear or at least would not imagine that the beast trying to open the bear-proof food locker would in fact be a bear and not a dog. And all the imagery that parents use with children to playfully introduce them to the grown-up world -- would a child really think about and recall things in those terms? Would intense fear cause a child to fall into these reveries of make-believe? Even so, it was an interesting read that puts you into the mind of the child, while at the same time afflicting you with the concerns of the parents first desperate and then resigned and then perhaps watching over them from a place apart or from our own place as observers and would-be parent surrogates.

The entire story is told by a child, so the manner in which it is written is all from a childlike perspective. Unfortunately I found the childlike descriptions and dialogue rather annoying. There were too many past tense memories mixed with the child's current situation making the story often gear off to another incident in the child's memory and then swinging back to the current story. I lost patience waiting for the story to get back on track. I have children so it's not that I don't understand children. I just couldn't sit through what I thought was going to be a suspenseful well written

intelligently told story about a bear attack when instead I felt like I was listening to a five year old babble on and on leaving most to imagination and little to what really happened. This approach just didn't grip my attention. I could only read a few chapters before I lost interest from a lack of connection to the subjects.

In February, 2014 The Globe and Mail recommended three new books from Canadian authors as must reads. These were The Troop by Nick Cutter, The Silent Wife by A.S.A. Harrison and Cameron's The Bear. I have now read and reviewed them all and the three in total receive seven stars. If this is the happening crop of Canadian fiction we have low expectations indeed. The Bear is part cathartic exercise for Cameron who worked in Ontario's Algonquin Park when a truly horrendous bear attack took place. That event was the catalyst for the novel. I admit the premise she establishes is intriguing and has echoes of Stephen King's The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon. However, Cameron employs a much younger girl and her musings and language soon irritate rather than engage. Some reviewers have pointed out the child's speech is inconsistent and uneven throughout. My complaint is in plot and hard to share without spoiling events. Suffice it to say that any horror and suspense is lost early in the book and I was left wondering if this should have been a short story, a nonfiction account of the real event or a Young Adult directed effort.

This book was hard to put down and yet also hard to read. Writing in 5 year old speak made it sometimes hard to decipher what exactly was happening to Anna. Yet that also made it compelling. A very memorable tale.

Obviously the author is not in touch with a five year olds capability. I am a retired Kindergarten teacher and children, like her characters, are so much smarter and wiser than the author gives them credit for. I literally was frustrated with the storyline and the dialogue presented by the children in the narration of this book. Spend your hard earned money elsewhere! I only gave it 1 star cause I was required to do so.

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