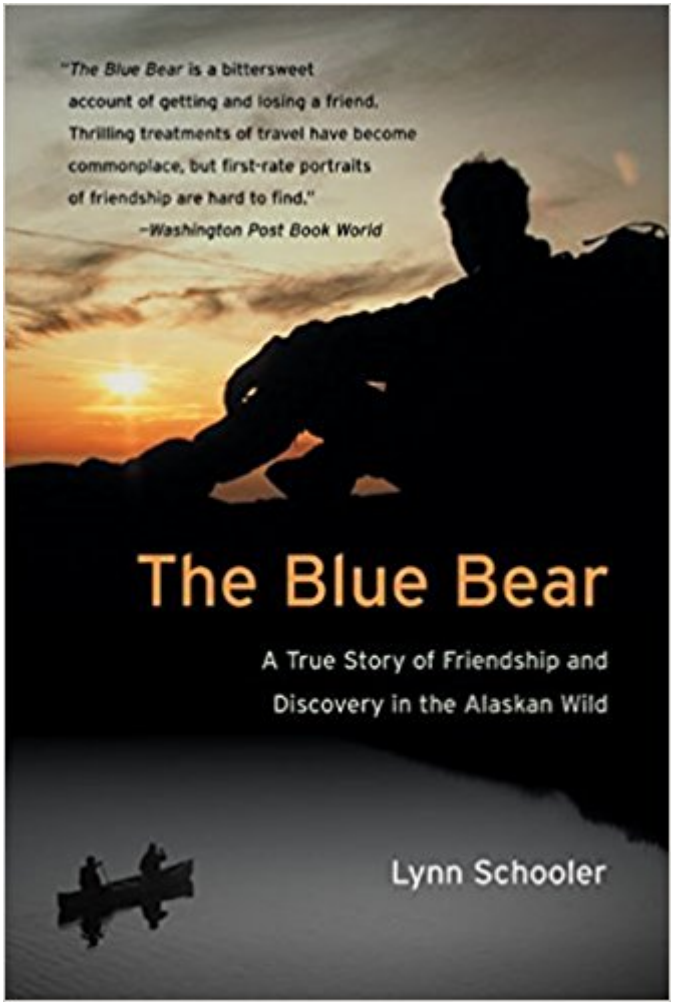
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The Blue Bear: A True Story Of Friendship And Discovery In The Alaskan Wild



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Synopsis

With a body twisted by adolescent scoliosis and memories of the brutal death of a woman he loved, Lynn Schooler kept the world at arm’s length, drifting through the wilds of Alaska as a commercial fisherman, outdoorsman, and wilderness guide. In 1990, Schooler met Japanese photographer Michio Hoshino, and began a profound friendship cemented by a shared love of adventure and a passionate quest to find the elusive glacier bear, an exceedingly rare creature, seldom seen and shrouded in legend. But only after Hoshino’s tragic death from a bear attack does Schooler succeed in photographing the animal -- completing a remarkable journey that ultimately brings new meaning to his life.The Blue Bear is an unforgettable book. Set amid the wild archipelagoes, deep glittering fjords, and dense primordial forests of Alaska’s Glacier Coast, it is rich with the lyric sensibility and stunning prose of such nature classics as Barry Lopez’s Arctic Dreams and Peter Matthiessen’s The Snow Leopard.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"People step into the [Alaskan] landscape and vanish without a trace," writes wildlife guide Lynn Schooler in this ode to the wild beauty of the Alaskan coast, an unusual friendship, and a mysterious bear with fur the color of "burnished metal." Schooler spent a decade searching for the elusive blue (or glacier) bear with Michio Hoshino, Japan’s preeminent wildlife photographer. Hoshino was a gentle genius who would sit still for hours, his face swelling from mosquito bites, for the perfect photograph, and who had the same patience and consideration for a bruised heart like

Schooler’s. Schooler had lost all ability to trust, scarred first by the scorn of classmates for his twisted body and finally by the brutal murder of the woman he loved. But as a guide--both for wildlife photographers and for readers of this evocative and gracefully composed memoir--Schooler richly reveals the place that sustains him. He makes remarkable connections between whales and the complex workings of old-growth forests, between glaciers dropping 100-foot columns of ice into waiting fjords, and the breathing of the planet. Ultimately, though, it is Hoshino’s death by a bear that finally enables Schooler to make peace with humanity and death. A quiet, profound gem. --Lesley Reed --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The strength of this beautifully crafted memoir lies in its evocation of the overpowering Alaskan landscape and the thoughts it imposes on the author’s agile and receptive mind, gradually opening his solitary heart to the grace of true friendship. As photographer and writer Schooler recounts, it’s been his lifelong tendency to turn inward, ever since his "grandmother’s hunchback gene put its weight on my shoulder... trying to hold me down even as my body grew taller." At 16, he fought his scoliosis by strapping on a steel body brace that extended from his chin to his hips, isolating him from other kids. It was a distance he chose to maintain when, two years later, he exchanged his brace for a backpack and departed for the lonely freedom of the countryside around his Alaskan home. Readers meet him as a middle-aged wilderness guide based in Juneau, emotionally battered by the brutal death of a woman he loved, yet still subsumed by the endlessly unfolding drama of wind, weather, predators and prey along the glaciered coast. On an auspicious chartered trip, Schooler leads renowned nature photographer Michio Hoshino to a circle of humpback whales that explode to the surface of a sun-flecked sea with brimming mouthfuls of herring. The Japanese man’s simple questions and exquisite sensitivity to the natural world and to his guide slowly draw Schooler out. Over the next decade, the men’s bond deepens as they decide to pursue the rare and elusive glacier, or "blue," bear in an archetypal journey whose meaning becomes apparent only after Schooler has suffered the loss of his friend. 8 pages of color photos. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Lynn Schooler is one of America’s great living authors. His work, set in Alaska, is beautifully crafted. In reading this book there are many times when one has simply to stop and re-read a sentence or whole paragraph to enjoy the beauty of such crystal clear writing and structure. I often wonder, "How many hours did he labor to get exactly the right combination of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs to make this master construction of a sentence?" The Blue Bear is non-fiction at its best. It

tells of the friendship between the author and a Japanese nature photographer, Michio Hoshino. Hoshino wants to get a picture of a rare glacier bear or blue bear. Schooler and Hoshino spent more than a decade looking for such a bear and their friendship grew and flourished during that time. As you follow Schooler and Hoshino through their ventures, you are treated to wonderful stories about Alaska from millions of years ago to the modern age. You can come to understand a lot about Alaska and what brings fascination to so many people by the largest of US states. I have been traveling to Alaska for over a decade in pursuit of salmon and halibut. I have traveled over a bit of the waters of Southeast Alaska - they are so huge that it would takes months, if not years, to explore them all. The Blue Bear will be with me on all forthcoming trips so that I can dip into it to enhance my understanding of and love for Alaska. But the value of the book with respect to Alaska is only a portion of what a reader will receive. The book is really about life and renewal, about seeking and losing, about loving and needing, and much more. Please read this book. You will be forever grateful you did.

Every so often you come across a writer whose stories come across so effortlessly, that it’s like you are sitting down with an old friend you have known all your life. Lynn is such a writer. His stories are beautiful, engaging, and penetrating.If you love stories of mountains, seas, bears, and Alaska, this book is a great choice. Lynn’s intelligence and humility gives his stories an extra layer of polish and depth that makes this book all the more enjoyable.I picked up the Blue Bear right after I finished reading Walking Home, Lynn’s other book. I would highly recommend that as well.It’s been a year since I read both these books, and I just searched him to see if he had written any more, which is when I decided to write this review (his stories will remain with you for a long time).

Schooler covers quite a bit of territory in this tight book. I enjoyed the accompanying map that I could use to follow all his adventures. His writing, above all else, is honest and at times gut-wrenching. Many of the awful experiences he suffers through are relatable. If anyone has ever unexpectedly lost a loved one, for whatever reason, can relate to the personal devastation he goes through. On the other hand he survives. This book is intimately involved about that survival. It’s also about the art of the naturalist photographer and the endless beauty of the inland-passage of Alaska. I couldn’t put this book down.

Lynn, what an amazing story. You have an amazing gift, and I’m so glad that you decided to share it with the world. I’m a full time professional photographer and absolutely loved everything about this

book.

What an amazing read! Lynn has a way of telling a story that keeps you involved. His descriptions make me feel as if I were there. He has put so much heart and soul as well as knowledge into this book that I feel like I was entering into another reality. Great job! I want to read his other books now!

An interesting Alaskan adventure told from the perspective of a guide taking visitors, including a famous photographer, into the back country.

Very enjoyable read about friendships, adventure, love and loss. Captivated me and lost sleep for a couple of days until I finished it. Of course, when it was finished, I wanted MORE! Excellent job.

Emotionally open and well written, this book is about the ties that we form and how passionate and deeply those connections can be to our core.

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