



Discover. Read. Share.

WHY WE LOVE *The Bear*

Dear Reader,

I am quite enamored with our newest Spotlight title—*The Bear* by Andrew Krivak—and wait patiently to hear how you enjoyed this quiet meditation of a novel. There is something calming about this book; quite the feat for something shelved among the post-apocalyptic.

A book about the last of humanity perhaps seems an odd choice, and well...why now?

When we had whittled our possible book club selections down to the last few options, *The Bear* resonated above all others. The world at large—especially our corner of it in the Midwestern United States—had gone home. The spring seemed brighter, the birds louder, the roads quieter. The constant thrum of activity became nearly inaudible. I read *The Bear* on a porch as nature came into her spring glory, and with everything being halted, the book and the ideas inside washed over me with a strange calm rather than grief. Honestly, it is quite hard to put into words the impact of *The Bear*.

If you read the reviews, the critics felt rather similar. *The Wall Street Journal* called it “the post-apocalypse utopia,” and *Publishers Weekly* said it was “transcendent.” The review, though, that I felt best put words to the breathlessness *The Bear* left me with was from *Seattle Book Review*:

“In a world drowning in careless excess, *The Bear* suggests another way, and the rewards are great.”

Perhaps the summer of 2020 is not such an odd choice of timing to be examining *The Bear*, as we’re forced to examine another way. Spending less on non-necessities and spending more time outdoors is our way in this moment, and dare we think...perhaps we can keep it? Less waste and less noise seem almost idyllic in this novel—the symbiotic relationship that forms between the daughter and the actual bear in this book would have been impossible could she not have cut through distractions to respect and listen to the creatures around her.

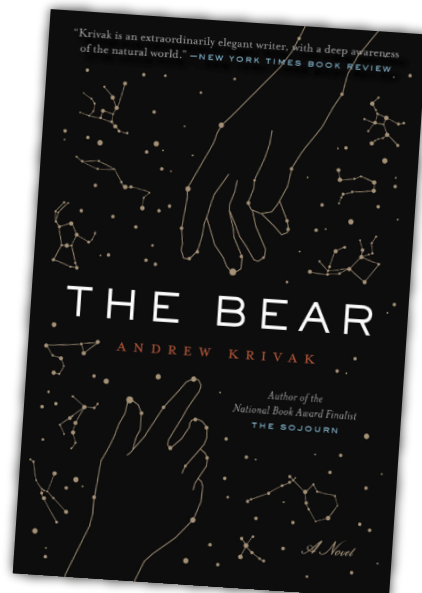
However, idyll isn’t the only idea you’ll explore here. The father-daughter relationship is so tender it would be a bold lie to promise that not even a little of your heart will break. As the book opens, the mother has already passed on, but the father keeps her alive through storytelling. This strong family bond—something that can get diluted with our modern day’s competition for attention—reminds us what is possible if one can focus enough not to take it for granted.

A fellow hoopla book team member and I were discussing the book, and she asked, “did you cry?” I did not. Again, that odd calm. In *The Bear*, there are no unlikeable characters. Nothing has a resolution, and yet all seems at peace. Nature has slowly reclaimed what humans had taken as theirs. There is no confusion—in *The Bear*, life can be beautiful until the very last day...if you let it.

I await your feedback on *The Bear*—but not too eagerly. First, please sit with this tender story for just a little while. This is a novel that shines with reflection. When you are ready to jump into the conversation, reach us on social @hoopladigital and find fellow readers using #hooplabookclub.

Peace,

Lindsay Williams
hoopla Digital



About the Author

Andrew Krivak is the author of two previous novels *The Signal Flame*, a Chautauqua Prize finalist, and *The Sojourn*, a National Book Award finalist and winner of both the Chautauqua Prize and Dayton Literary Peace Prize. He is also the author of *A Long Retreat: In Search of a Religious Life*, a memoir about his eight years in the Jesuit Order, and editor of *The Letters of William Carlos Williams to Edgar Irving Williams, 1902–1912*, which received the Louis L. Martz Prize. Krivak lives with his wife and three children in Somerville, Massachusetts, and Jaffrey, New Hampshire, in the shadow of Mount Monadnock, which inspired much of the landscape in *The Bear*.



Selected Praise

"Lyrical...Gorgeous...Krivak's serene and contemplative novel invites us to consider a vision of time as circular, of existence as grand and eternal beyond the grasp of individuals—and of a world able to outlive human destructiveness."

—**Washington Post**

"Arresting, exquisite...*The Bear* is more than a parable for our times, it's a call to listen to the world around us before it's too late."

—**Observer**

"Beautiful...So loving and vivid that you can feel the lake water and smell the sea... A perfect fable for the age of solastalgia."

—**Slate**

"[A] tender apocalyptic fable...endowed with such fullness of meaning that you have to assign this short, touching book its own category: the post-apocalypse utopia."

—**Wall Street Journal**

"A powerful allegory about the struggles and graces of life."

—**America Magazine**

"A beautiful, gripping, thought-provoking exploration of human rewilding and nature's dominion."

—**Winnipeg Free Press**

"A lyrical fable for fans of soft apocalypse... You'll find yourself wanting to read sentences aloud for the full affect."

—**The Sound**