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A Kodiak Bear Mauling: Living And Dying With Alaska's Bears



Synopsis

Have you wondered what it would really be like to survive an encounter like the one portrayed in the recent film; *The Revenant*? In 1998 the author survived a horrific mauling by a Kodiak brown bear. This is the story of that event along with additional tales and personal observations about these coastal giants. The book includes a number of graphic photographs taken within minutes of the actual event, along with the authors personal photos of bears and other Alaskan wildlife. From the book: [I] began yelling as loud as I could for Chuck (who I knew wasn't far away) to shoot the bear. Perhaps the yelling attracted her to my face because she now grabbed my skull, her upper canines sinking into my right eye socket and cheek respectively, while her lower jaw enveloped the back of my head. The sensation was incredible, as if my head was in a powerful vise. My vision began to narrow and darken while a roaring sound grew deep inside my head. It was like being under water too long, holding your breath and fighting to get back to the surface, everything beginning to get dark. I remember thinking; "This is it, this is how it all ends..." Yet, as this went on I was also pulling and turning my head away with as much force as I could muster until suddenly it (my head) popped free with a grating sound that I could sense internally rather than hear audibly. Her upper canines had ripped loose from my eye socket and face leaving two furrows from the entry points well into my hairline. I was partially scalped, but she hadn't "popped" my head, the typical killing method used on deer or moose..... [I] The Kodiak archipelago is tucked within the long reach of the Alaskan coast like a group of badly behaved children in the arms of a somewhat aloof mother. Thumbing its nose at the latitude of its arctic parent, cheeky Kodiak bathes in the waters of warm southern currents which give the island a temperate maritime climate seemingly more appropriate to locales far to the south. In the same way that the Gulf Stream warms the British Isles, the Kuroshiro current begins in warmer latitudes far to the south to move northward along the rim of the Pacific and then east to the Gulf of Alaska to surround Kodiak with a warm wet noose. Above this warm river in the cold northern sea is another warm river of moist low pressure air. These warm sea currents and air masses move north to collide with much colder waters and arctic high pressure air along the Aleutian Islands. This remote island chain marks the boundary between the genteel Pacific and its rowdy and temperamental arctic neighbor, the Bering Sea. The enormous temperature and pressure extremes in this "Birthplace of the Winds" spawn a seemingly endless series of cyclonic low pressure storms which spin to the northeast to lash Kodiak with the rain and fog which envelope it for much of the year. That wet marine climate ends abruptly when it meets the high coastal mountains ringing the Alaska mainland. Beyond that point is the true arctic - the land of Iditarod and Jack London, of clear skies and the Aurora Borealis. In winter, while mainland Alaska is

covered in deep snow, Kodiak is glistening in the fog and seemingly endless winter rains: mildewed perhaps, but generally ice free at sea level for most of the winter. This winter moisture is what makes the island group the rich land that it is, drenching the lower elevations with misty rains and piling up as deep snow in the mountains to replenish the myriad rivers and streams through the dryer summer months. In turn, those clear mountain streams rush down to provide spawning grounds for the hundreds of millions of salmon which annually return to the islands in the age-old cycle. [/I]

Book Information

File Size: 3667 KB

Print Length: 312 pages

Publisher: Terror Bay Publishing; 1 edition (January 11, 2014)

Publication Date: January 11, 2014

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B006Z1FHTC

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #393,441 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #23

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Customer Reviews

The title of the book is a little misleading. While yes, the mauling of the author is featured in the book in great detail, what this book is about is the author's great love of nature, Kodiak bear biology and behavior. Squeamish people may skip the mauling(it's just one fifth of the book), and still enjoy the book greatly.Author also gives very good advice on how to avoid bears, or make them avoid you.The biology and behavior parts of the book are well written, and to my well-read layman's eye appear factually correct. They're written in plain speak, and use few specialized words.Kodiak is a

beautiful island of mostly untouched wilderness, and the book describes this in a way that's nearly poetic. I confess that I'd love to go there, even though the place has the highest bear density in the world, and getting there is not cheap (perhaps by ship?). There is enough humor and one especially amusing anecdote involving fishing deep in bear country that reveals the author shares my twisted sense of humor :-). In my mind's eye, I see the author as a worldly, self-educated man who has that very rare quality of actually being able to think hard, and see things from multiple points of view. All in all, this is a very good first book, and I recommend it to all nature lovers and hunters. The only downside of this book is, that it's not very long. It's not expensive either.. so I guess it's okay.

...before that sow bear peeled half his face off." Mr. Rogan has written a compelling account which paints a vivid mental picture in my mind. The story of his narrow escape is fascinating, and his road to physical and mental recovery as well. As he relives the adventure with the reader by his side, we don't have to endure the expense and ugly scars from a bear attack of our own to share the adrenaline - that alone is well worth the price. Thanks to Brian, Chuck and Ira for pulling him through so he could tell the tale.

He goes into much detail about life in Alaska with all kinds of interesting information. He's a hunter so there are stories about his adventures (also interesting). About halfway through his book he tells you about his almost fatal bear attack with information leading up to it and what happened afterwards. I like that he gives really good information about his opinion of bear behavior from his observations and probably some research. You'll definitely want to read this if you're planning on visiting grizzly bear country; he has some really good advice on what to do. He ends the book with the aftermath of his terrifying experience and you are left feeling satisfied that he covered everything. You'll be glad you read this book.

As much a travelogue and diary as it is an adventure story, Keith Rogan's book echoes with the truth like the call of an eagle in a hidden cove. I first heard about Keith's experience on an online forum where people liked to discuss things like bears and guns and the effectiveness of one over the other from the safety of their armchairs. After a few days of heated 'discussion' a voice of reason and composure stood out. That voice was Keith's, a man who had 'been there and done that.' While I had 'heard' Keith's story in short snippets I had never heard 'the whole tale' as they say. And I'm glad I finally got to read it. I got to know Keith a little better through his recollections and observations before 'the big moment' that would propel him to write the book. When that big

moment comes you'll be glad you're reading about it from the comfort of your armchair rather than a freezing windswept hillside in the Alaskan wilderness. His keen eye records the smallest of details while still keeping a panoramic view of Alaskan life. There's a bit of a poet naturalist under his bearded facade that comes out as he tells the story. Not that his language is flowery, but it's colorful and precise. It's a perfect afternoon read far away from bear country.

I found this book so gripping that I read it in one sitting. The mauling is only a small part of the story. Most of the book is about the beauty of Kodiak, life there (especially hunting, hiking and fishing), and about the fascinating characteristics of bears. I also enjoyed reading about the author's wolf that goes on his hunting trips! I am recommending this book to everyone I know. I have never been to Kodiak or anywhere similar but after reading this book, Kodiak is near the top of my places to visit before I die.

I always enjoy stories involving Alaska but some authors are better than others and this author is definitely one of the better ones at telling stories. Sometimes timing in writing, just like in stand-up comedy, can make a book enjoyable or a little boring to read. As soon as I realized I had read enough of a story line in the book and was at risk of having boredom set in, the author quickly wrapped it up and took me to another interesting story. Either he had a really good editor or he is just good. I mean really you can't write a very long book about just a bear mauling so there has to be some surrounding relative stories. Mr. Rogan does this so well in this book that I found myself amazed at his story telling. His descriptive language created a vivid image of some of the characters in his stories. I loved the description of the doctor standoff. I enjoyed the lessons on bears and Kodiak versus bears in other areas and it was nice to learn about Kodiak, a place I never knew anything about before reading this book. The book was a nice, easy read. It was well written with just a few spelling or grammar errors, which I've highlighted and noted. These are shared if the author wants to correct them or decide they aren't really errors. This isn't quite a 5 star read for me but I'm pretty stingy with 5 stars. I liked it but I can't say I loved it.

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