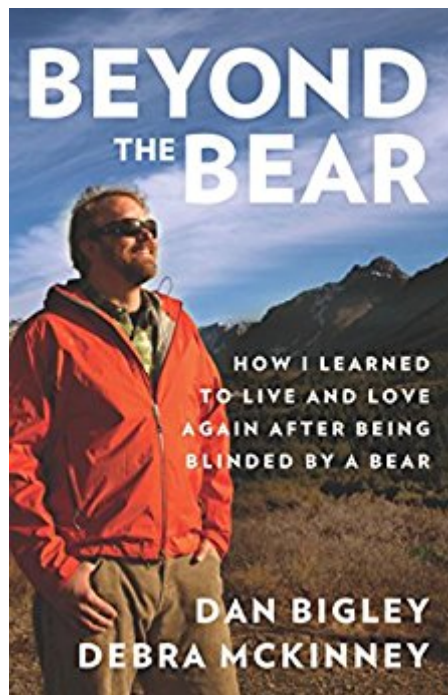




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Beyond The Bear: How I Learned To Live And Love Again After Being Blinded By A Bear



Synopsis

A 25-year-old backcountry wanderer, a man happiest exploring wild places with his dog, Dan Bigley woke up one midsummer morning to a day full of promise. Before it was over, after a stellar day of salmon fishing along Alaska's Kenai and Russian rivers, a grizzly came tearing around a corner in the trail. Dan barely had time for a bear charging to register before it had him on the ground, altering his life forever. As the medevac report put it, "Upper nose, eyes, forehead anatomy unrecognizable," as the medevac report put it. Until then, one thing after another had fallen into place in Dan's life. He had a job he loved taking troubled kids on outdoor excursions. He had just bought a cabin high in the Chugach Mountains with a view that went on forever. He was newly in love. After a year of being intrigued by a woman named Amber, they had just spent their first night together. All of this was shattered by the mauling that nearly killed him, that left him blind and disfigured. Facing paralyzing pain and inconceivable loss, Dan was in no shape to be in a relationship. He and Amber let each other go. Five surgeries later, partway into his long healing journey, they found their way back to each other. The couple's unforgettable story is one of courage, tenacious will, and the power of love to lead the way out of darkness. Dan Bigley's triumph over tragedy is a testament to the ability of the human spirit to overcome physical and emotional devastation, to choose not just to live, but to live fully. Visit Dan Bigley's site or Beyond the Bear.

Book Information

File Size: 1860 KB

Print Length: 225 pages

Publisher: Lyons Press (March 21, 2013)

Publication Date: July 30, 2014

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00MJD7F3G

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #610,681 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #36

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Science > Biological Sciences > Animals > Bears

#88 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Special Groups > Disabled #149 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Bears

Customer Reviews

I purchased this book when I received an .com email stating that it was like Elizabeth Strout's latest and truly wonderful new novel, "The Burgess Brothers." I have no idea how anyone would say one is like the other unless, of course, the issue is the excellence of the writing in both. Hers is a novel. This is a memoir. Hers takes place in Maine and New York City. This in Alaska. I suspect many readers will, like me, have our own bear stories. My maternal grandparents who never had electricity on their hill farm in northern Vermont until their many children gave them the half-mile or so of line needed as their 50th anniversary gift. And it is this grandfather, part native American, who killed a bear with a pitchfork once while pitching hay into a mound during haying season. And it was on this farm where my grandmother silently escorted me a couple of my cousins away from the wild raspberries where we had been picking. She had dropped her nearly full bucket onto the ground. I thought how strange as she whisper walk quickly but don't run back to the house. Only when we arrived did she tell us that a bear had been there and probably had been diverted by the welcoming sight of those hard-picked berries. So in that context I entered the story of Dan Bigley as told by him and a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist from Alaska, Debra McKinney. I shed tears often as I read this book. I have never been to Alaska and have never had a desire to do so. And this book hasn't convinced me to go although it is so clear that these authors love the place, love the landscape, the fishing, the people who live there, but maybe not so much the bears. Not any more. Many others have written about the content of this great piece of writing. So I won't do so.

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