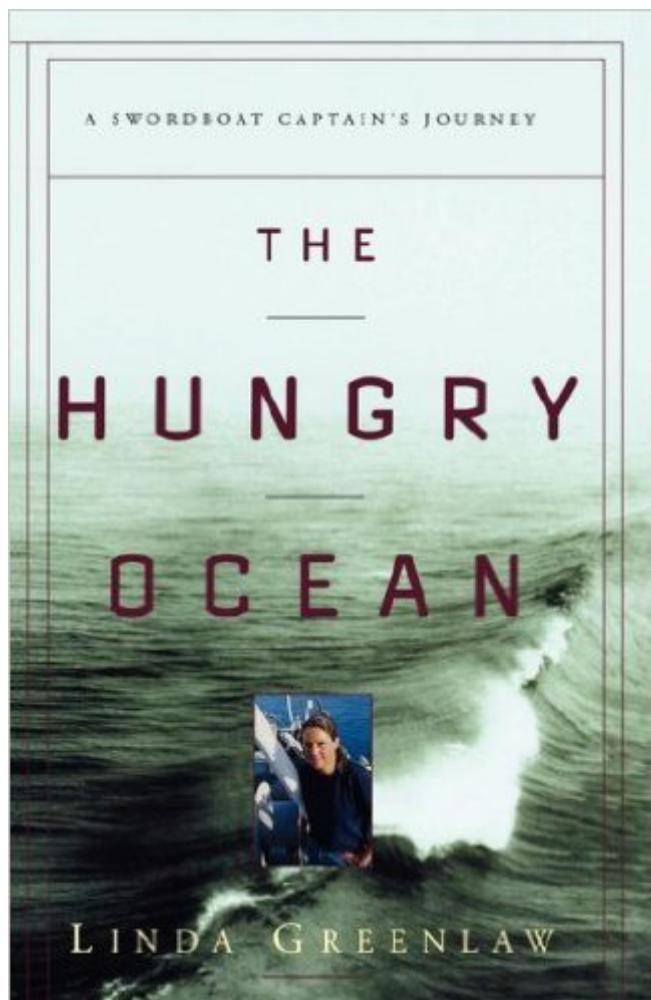


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The Hungry Ocean: A Swordboat Captain's Journey



Synopsis

The term fisherwoman does not exactly roll trippingly off the tongue, and Linda Greenlaw, the world's only female swordfish boat captain, isn't flattered when people insist on calling her one. "I am a woman. I am a fisherman. . . . I am not a fisherwoman, fisherlady, or fishergirl. If anything else, I am a thirty-seven-year-old tomboy. It's a word I have never outgrown." Greenlaw also happens to be one of the most successful fishermen in the Grand Banks commercial fleet, though until the publication of Sebastian Junger's *The Perfect Storm*, "nobody cared." Greenlaw's boat, the Hannah Boden, was the sister ship to the doomed *Andrea Gail*, which disappeared in the mother of all storms in 1991 and became the focus of Junger's book. *The Hungry Ocean*, Greenlaw's account of a monthlong swordfishing trip over 1,000 nautical miles out to sea, tells the story of what happens when things go right--proving, in the process, that every successful voyage is a study in narrowly averted disaster. There is the weather, the constant danger of mechanical failure, the perils of controlling five sleep-, women-, and booze-deprived young fishermen in close quarters, not to mention the threat of a bad fishing run: "If we don't catch fish, we don't get paid, period. In short, there is no labor union." Greenlaw's straightforward, uncluttered prose underscores the qualities that make her a good captain, regardless of gender: fairness, physical and mental endurance, obsessive attention to detail. But, ultimately, Greenlaw proves that the love of fishing--in all of its grueling, isolating, suspenseful glory--is a matter of the heart and blood, not the mind. "I knew that the ocean had stories to tell me, all I needed to do was listen." --Svenja Soldovieri

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are some people who seem to have a level of talent that is apparent in everything they do; there is nothing that resembles a veneer about them. Captain Greenlaw is an educated woman, when she is on her boat she is a leader and the best fisherman plying her trade. So when she sits down to tell her story, it is no surprise that she can write well. I would not wager this is the last book we will have from her. I certainly hope there are more. I found her writing to emulate the way she runs her boat, organized, meticulous, and without unnecessary baggage. And when she related childhood memories, or shared dialogue, she related it as well or better than Authors with many books to their name. Individuals who are excellent at what they do are often said to appear to do their task effortlessly. The book certainly was not an easy task for her, but there is a vast difference between being simplistic and relating a portion of a life. Embellishment is best left for ghostwritten memoirs and autobiographies. There is nothing done to complicate her life's work, why should her story diverge from that path? The closest I have come to a swordfish is with a fork, and it had long since been reduced from the massive creatures these can be, to a sliver of these fish she hunts. She and her crew define risk taking. They don't occasionally face lethal risk or even frequently risk their lives they constantly make this wager. And they do so not knowing whether they will make a dime for a month at sea in conditions that most could tolerate for about an hour presuming the water was calm, and seconds presuming 70 knot winds and the seas that follow them.

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