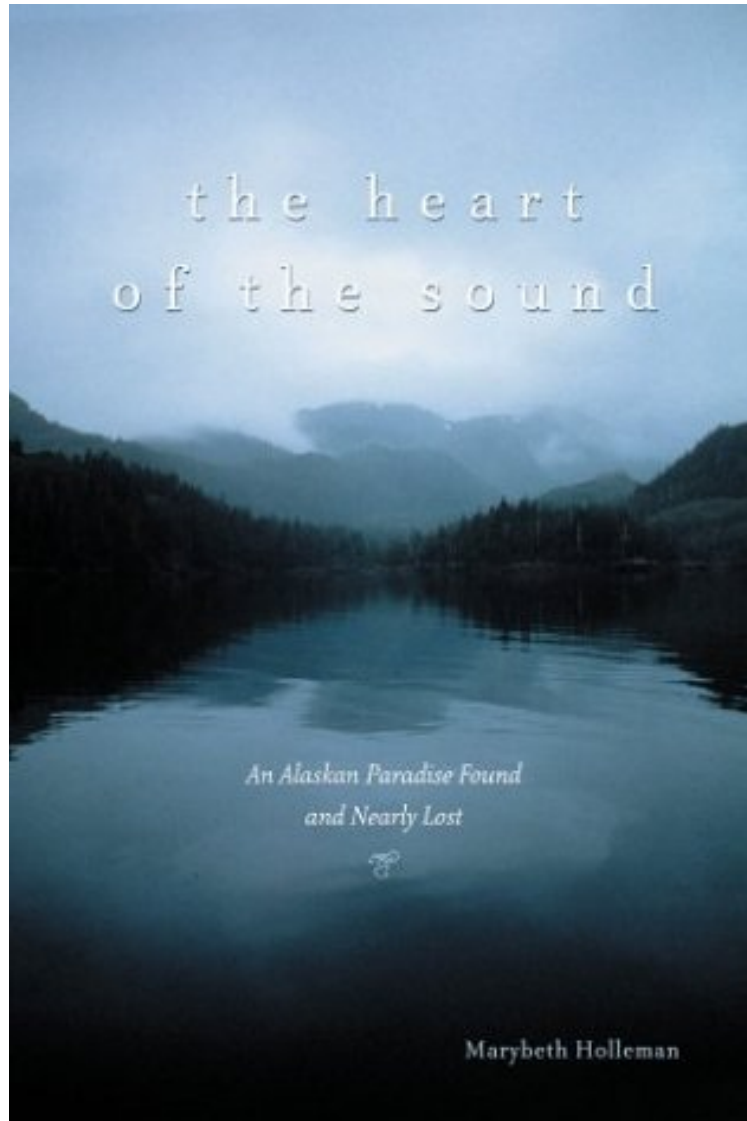


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Heart Of The Sound

Marybeth Holleman

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Marybeth Holleman : Heart Of The Sound before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Heart Of The Sound:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Hope in the Face of DespairBy Jerome Walker, M.D.After reading this book, I bought another copy to give to a friend who had experienced a series of losses and was fighting off despair. She took the book in her hands. Trusting my advice, she ran her hand over the cover of the book and said quietly, "It's beautiful." "Yes," I responded, "and so is the story. I know it may seem strange that a story about an oil spill and it's aftermath could be a source of hope, but trust me." My friend randomly opened the book and turned to

this passage which she read aloud, "The cries of loons had always comforted me, a comfort I now craved, for I was fearful of feelings" *The Heart of the Sound* is the kind of book I like to read and recommend, because in the reading of it I get to know a brave and committed woman who understands her life as an adventure and a journey with challenges both personal and public. I learn about a place unspeakably beautiful and threatened by forces that threaten us all. I learn about life forms that I simultaneously long to see in actuality and feel that I have seen through the reading: a sea otter floating on the water holding and suckling her infant on her chest; killer whales seemingly dancing in synchrony; and bears fishing for salmon. When I finished this book, I put it down feeling enriched and grateful and confident I would read it again. And, I recommend it to anyone who wants to learn about Alaska, natural history, and environmental challenges, as well as those looking for a good story full of adventure and courage. Marybeth Holleman brings to her writing an open heart and the capacity to embrace the inevitable pain that comes with loving a person or a place. In the process, she uncovers the joy and hope that is available to all who nurture life.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Concern Born of Love
By Anne Coray
One of the things I most admire about Marybeth Holleman is something she told me in person: "I moved to Alaska because of Prince William Sound." This statement is verified in her writing, which is replete with examples of her love and devotion to the place, even when the environment presents obstacles. Camped on Decision Point, she finds the terrain so water-logged it takes five railroad flares to start a fire and she and her husband are forced to don head nets to escape the swarms of no-see-ums. This is not the kind of experience most of us come away from feeling enraptured, but Holleman's reverence and awe never falter. Crucial questions are presented in the last third of the book. In the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez oil spill Holleman casts a critical eye on restoration money designated for scientific study. "All this counting, tagging, radio-implanting, all these projects, research, buildings--I could not fathom how they would help restore the wild," she writes. Finally, the book takes on a larger scope, asking that we take a hard look at our adaptability to environmental degradation. Things that bother her should trouble us all: noise pollution, species' extinction, global warming, acid rain. How is it that we have come to accept these phenomena as "natural" by-products of economic growth? Thanks to Holleman and other nature writers these issues will continue to surface in discussions across the nation. And, if we are lucky, those in power will begin to listen.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Of Places Wild and Human
By Loreen Lilyn Lee
This book is many things. It is a personal journey about following one's heart. It's a love story between a woman and a place. It's about beauty. It's about loss and change. Marybeth Holleman witnessed the unspoiled beauty of Prince William Sound, the immediate aftermath of the oil spill from the Exxon Valdez, and subsequent years of healing. She details the devastation wrought by both the ruptured oil tanker and the swarm of experts and volunteers who came to help. Fifteen years later, the coasts and wildlife of Prince William Sound still show evidence of this oil. This is an intimate look at a specific wild place in the vastness of Alaska. A gentle voice tells her stories, reflects on her life and beloved environment, and reveals an inner landscape. The pages display photographs taken by the author. The words are her love songs for the wild creatures, the water, and many natural wonders of the sound. Such intimacy brings us into her world and broadens our capacity to see and to care what she is passionate about, perhaps humanizing us in unexpected but important ways. I hope to visit Alaska some day to see the glaciers and the wildlife, to experience the wonders, serenity, and potency of nature. When I go, I will have more respect for the fragility of such beauty. *The Heart of the Sound* gave me a more complete and complex story about a well-known disaster--not just how this event affected the author and the Alaskan community back then, but how it affects all of us, all of life still.

"You can't step in the same river twice although I once believed I could. I believed that the pieces of my life I had chosen, those I held close to my heart, would, once chosen and held, remain the same." from the book *How does one recover from disaster?* That question is at the heart of Marybeth Holleman's lyrical, elegiac response to the repercussions of the Exxon Valdez oil spill that devastated Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989. Twining together the destruction of an ecosystem and the disintegration of her marriage, Holleman explores the resiliency of nature both wild and human and the ways in which that resiliency is tested. Like the oil that remains pooled beneath rocks years after the tanker spill, the emotional wounds of the past lie just below the surface. Recovery and restoration from the pain wrought by human hands does not come easily. If much of nature writing is about the heart's search for an unspoiled, perfect landscape, *The Heart of the Sound* is about what happens when the return-to-paradise fantasy is over and paradise is lost. In language rich with passion and hard-won insight, Holleman creates a captivating picture of a woman who found her Eden in the sweeping fjords of Alaska only to lose it to ecological tragedy. But somewhere within that loss, she finds herself.

"A love song to one of earth's loveliest and most threatened places intertwined with human loves, disappointments, and healing. An extraordinary book full of wonder and passion and a courageous story about the heart of Prince William Sound and about sounding the depths of our own hearts." David W. Orr, author of *Earth in Mind*