



The Breath of a Whale: The Science and Spirit of Pacific Ocean Giants

Leigh Calvez

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With style, accessible writing, and a narrative of personal growth and discovery, Leigh Calvez's *The Breath of a Whale* is both more positive and more personal than other books of its type. It is a softer take on the environmental calamities that devastate whale populations and human morale.

Calvez's semi-autobiographical account of several close encounters with whales and dolphins, as well as with the researchers who dedicate their lives to the study of marine mammals, is unabashed in calling for the conservation of whales and protection of their environment. It does so with personality, sensitivity, and clear love for cetaceans.

While the whales star, Calvez's spiritual journey is a significant and important part of the book. She references her career, personal life, emotional state, and health regularly, usually tying them back to her work in conservation and especially with whales. The personal lives of whales feature prominently; whale families, whale culture, and whale tool customs all serve to make these giant and still mysterious sea creatures more familiar.

The book walks a fine line between acknowledging the complex behaviors of whales and projecting humanity onto the creatures. It invests itself in humanity's role as guardians of the environment. It nods to the fact that staying strong in the face of environmental destruction is difficult, but ultimately expresses faith in humanity and hope for the future of whales worldwide.

The Breath of a Whale will please those who love whales and dolphins, as well as citizen environmentalists who dedicate themselves to ocean ecology. This book dealing with the environment during a fraught time is still light, enjoyable—and recommended.

ANNA CALL (March/April 2019)

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