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Swimming To Antarctica: Tales Of A Long-Distance Swimmer



Synopsis

Now in paperback, with photos and maps added especially for this new edition, here is the acclaimed life story of a woman whose drive and determination inspire everyone she touches. Lynne Cox started swimming almost as soon as she could walk. By age sixteen, she had broken all records for swimming the English Channel. Her daring eventually led her to the Bering Strait, where she swam five miles in thirty-eight-degree water in just a swimsuit, cap, and goggles. In between those accomplishments, she became the first to swim the Strait of Magellan, narrowly escaped a shark attack off the Cape of Good Hope, and was cheered across the twenty-mile Cook Strait of New Zealand by dolphins. She even swam a mile in the Antarctic. Lynne writes the same way she swims, with indefatigable spirit and joy, and shares the beauty of her time in the water with a poet's eye for detail. She has accomplished yet another feat--writing a new classic of sports memoir.

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Customer Reviews

Just about every other person in the world seems like an unfocused dilettante compared to long-distance swimming legend Lynne Cox. Soon At the age of 14, after several years of training hard in pools and the open sea, she was swimming the 26 mile stretch from Catalina Island to the coast of California. A year after that, she surpassed a lifelong goal by not only swimming the English Channel but setting a new men's and women's record in the process. Rather than be satisfied, Cox aimed still higher, conquering the Cook Strait in New Zealand, the Strait of Magellan and, the Cape of Good Hope, none of which had been swum before. Being the first to swim the Bering Sea from Alaska to what was then the Soviet Union is perhaps Cox's most impressive achievement, requiring

a phenomenal amount of physical strength and endurance to withstand the chilly waters and diplomatic persistence to gain permission from Gorbachev during the Cold War. *Swimming to Antarctica* is Cox's remarkably detailed account of her major swims and all that went right and wrong with them. While there are plenty of highs, as one might expect in a memoir by so impressive an athlete, all is not sunshine and roses for Cox. She overcomes extreme physical hardship, predatory sharks, and a swim through a sewage-soaked Nile while suffering from dysentery. There is plenty in *Swimming to Antarctica* to encourage even non-swimmers to work hard to achieve the seemingly impossible, but Cox, a skilled and highly readable writer, sticks to the swimming, leading the reader by example. For thrills and inspiration, it's hard to find anyone better than Lynne Cox.

--John Moe --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Cox, one of the world's leading long-distance swimmers, has been a risk-taker ever since she was nine and chose the freezing water of a New Hampshire pool in a storm over getting out and doing calisthenics. After her family moved to California so she and her siblings could train as speed swimmers, she discovered long-distance ocean swimming. Her first open-water event, a team race across the Catalina Channel, convinced her to train for the English Channel. At 15, she broke the Channel record, and decided she needed a new goal. Up to this point, Cox's story reads like a fairy tale of hard work, careful planning and good support, crowned with success. It isn't until she competes in the Nile River swim that the tale turns ugly-she's swimming in raw sewage and chemical waste, fending off the dead rats and broken glass, so sick with dysentery she lands in the hospital. Undeterred, she plans more ambitious swims-around the shark-infested Cape of Good Hope, across Alaska's Glacier Bay-to prepare for her big dream, a swim from Alaska to the Soviet Union across the Bering Strait. While offering herself to researchers studying the effects of cold on the human body, her political goals are even larger: to bring countries and peoples together, using swimming "to establish bridges between borders." Cox ends her story with her swim to Antarctica, where she finishes the first Antarctic mile in 32-degree water in 25 minutes. Even though readers know she survived to tell the tale, it's a thrilling, awesome and well-written story.

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I'm a distance swimmer (five miles a day for 22 years...) and this book is sort of like "coming home" to me. I read it every year and constantly come away inspired and re-committed to my daily practice. I've read a lot of swimming memoirs but for some reason this particular book is the one

that *really* captures what swimming is all about- not just the physical aspects of it, but the extreme emotional and mental parts of it (especially those long-haul swims...)In addition, the accounts of different locations in which Lynne Cox has traveled is completely fascinating. I've become a little obsessed with different bodies of water and what swimming in them is like, and "Swimming to Antarctica" REALLY offers a great variety of accounts of different areas around the globe and how vastly different water can be in one location compared to the next. This is a must-read for all those who love to swim, or those who want to understand why it is that some of us are so obsessed with distance swimming. HIGHLY recommended.

If you want to know what swimming is about for those long distance swimmers who take on oceans, seas, and lakes with frigid temperatures (you and I most likely would not last for five seconds without popping out like a champagne cork) this is a great read. What Lynne Cox has in common with others, such as top musicians who achieve prominence, mountain climbers, etc) is a fierce dedication and belief in herself without compromise. It is that focus that achieves greatness, regardless of the field, and one which we lesser mortals can only admire.

I recently read this book to get psyched up for an open water swimming vacation my husband and I had signed up for. Even though Lynne's kind of swimming is something I'd never do (I love swimming, but hate cold), the story of her swims around the world was told in a way that you were right up close to her and feeling very involved with each and every swimming experience. The writing is superb, the swimming scenes exciting and full of vivid (spoiler alert - sometimes too vivid in the case of the Nile swim with the turds and the dead dog - EWW), and she was a very likable character I wanted to follow through with to the end. It was amazing reading about some of these places. Even though I wouldn't be caught dead swimming in shark infested waters or cold seas, I felt inspired to enjoy the sport of swimming to the fullest and strive for my next goal.

Lynne Cox's book detailing her long distance swims is fascinating. It is easy to get wrapped up in her adventures, and hard to put the book down. The writing is effective and engaging, and the stories themselves awe-inspiring. Somewhere around the middle of the book, I began to feel that her obsessiveness was somewhat over the top, and wondered what the point was in her taking on the increasingly difficult and death-defying swims. But near the end, when she is finally able to achieve her lifelong goal of swimming across the Bering Strait, it all comes together. I got the chills reading that chapter, not just because of the 32 degree water. Only downside to the book is the lack

of details about her family and background, which would frame her story and put it into context. And, echoing another reviewer...where are the pictures?! Maybe in the next edition.

amazing and. blew my mind. made me choke up. this woman is 1000 times stronger and braver and more wild than I could ever be. I didn't want book to end.

We humans....we love to push the envelope. Almost ANY tale of achieving extreme physical or mental achievement will attract our attention, but now and then a story that combines astounding prowess with charm and warmth comes along. Such is Lynne Cox's *Swimming to Antarctica*. This book doesn't require a lengthy explanation for why it is a certifiably enjoyable read: extraordinary physical prowess combines with even more extraordinary strength of will in the person of Lynne Cox, and the results are legendary. Cox's writing skills are not extraordinary, but her down home writing voice combines with a choice of life goals to create a tale in which the sum is far greater than the parts. You might expect, in a book written by a world class athlete, to hear some eye-popping stories of achievement, and your expectations will be met. What you might NOT expect is that Lynne Cox's unassuming, almost humble, telling of her story will have a lingering affect on you (and me) the reader. Cox's endurance in the water is matched by her endurance in going after a goal, and her persistence in getting permission to do certain feats (swimming the Bering Strait) is almost as astounding as her actual swims. Her never-say-die attitude both in and out of the water has on multiple occasions led me to lace up my running shoes on cold and gray days, or led me to go a few steps further in pursuing a non-athletic goal than I previously would have. There are many other fabulous tales of athletic achievement out there, from Lance Armstrong's *It's Not About the Bike*, to the more recently popular *Man on Wire* (about the gentleman who illegally strung a wire between the Twin Towers, and walked back and forth along it several times). The pleasant steady character of Lynne Cox's biography outpaces both of these books in terms of changing the way we each view our own personal challenges. If you're a swimmer, this is a must read. If you're not the type that likes to get wet, you'll still find yourself immersed in, charmed by, and changed by Lynne Cox's wonderful story.

Every page of *Swimming to Antarctica* kept my interest. I am not a swimmer, only a "chunky dunker." I was so impressed with it that I posted it on my facebook page. My granddaughter is a junior life guard and I am giving this to her as a present. So well written. So informative about cold water swimming. You will enjoy it - a swimmer or not.

If you swim, love adventure or just want to sit in your favorite chair and read you have to get this book. I couldn't put it down.

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