



Ghost of Spirit Bear

By Ben Mikaelson

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In the wilderness, Cole found peace. But this isn't the great outdoors. it's high school.

At fifteen, Cole Matthews faced a prison sentence for slamming another student's head against a sidewalk. To avoid prison, he volunteered for Native American Circle Justice and agreed to a year in exile on a remote Alaskan island. There he was mauled by the legendary Spirit Bear and nearly faced death . . . but finally found redemption.

Now, his banishment over, he has to return home and face the one thing he may not be able to handle: high school. Gangs haunt the hallways. Cole finds violence at every turn and as the hate-filled school reaches its boiling point, the hibernating rage inside Cole begins to stir. In this tale of urban survival and self-awareness, Cole realizes it's not enough to change himself. He has to change his world.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6–10—Mikaelson's sequel to *Touching Spirit Bear* (HarperCollins, 2001), the much-lauded novel exploring the psychology and community dynamics of bullying, is likely to draw a split decision among potential audiences. While teachers and counselors may find it to be an inspiring, timely, and instructive piece of bibliotherapy, street-smart students might find it improbable, pat, and didactic. The story picks up with newly reformed bully Cole Matthews and the boy he once beat mercilessly, Peter Driscall, returning to the demoralizing realities of their beleaguered urban high school after having spent extended therapeutic time exploring their inner lives on a remote Alaskan Island. While Cole had realized genuine peace and personal insight in exile, he can sense his old rage beginning to resurface when Peter, whom he now considers his best friend, becomes the target of gang attacks. Ultimately, in the wake of the suicide of a bullied classmate, Cole decides that the only real hope for changing the self-destructive attitudes and behaviors in his high school is to appeal to his principal to let him lead an attempt to heal its overall spirit using some of the same techniques his Tlingit mentor, Garvey, had employed with him. She does agree, of course, as obstacles tend to topple just a bit too easily in this overly whitewashed sequel.—*Jeffrey Hastings, Highlander Way Middle School, Howell, MI*

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From [Booklist](#)

Readers who clamored for a sequel to *Touching Spirit Bear* (2001), which left them wondering what would happen when Cole and Peter left Alaska, can finally breathe a sigh of relief—sort of. Cole's father will have nothing to do with him, and Peter's father, always critical, now considers his son damaged goods. School is a nightmare. Cole and Peter are prime targets for campus bullies, and if Cole violates parole by fighting back, he'll go to jail. Both boys are frustrated and long for the serenity they left behind, but their efforts to recapture their experiences are laughably inadequate. It takes two tragic events to force the boys to face their demons and effect real change at home and at school. Mikaelson provides a seamless transition between the two stories, as well as a highly satisfying resolution, and readers will quickly realize that, despite the new setting, this novel is just as much a survival story as its predecessor. The boys' urban experiences are as gritty, dangerous, and physically and emotionally daunting as their adventures in the wild. Grades 6-9. -- Chris Sherman

Review

"Gripping and fast moving." (KLIATT)

"Mikaelson provides a seamless transition between the two stories, as well as a highly satisfying resolution, and readers will find that, despite the new setting, this novel is just as much a survival story as its predecessor." (ALA Booklist)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Riley:

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Jean Mora:

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