



The Shark Caller

Books Reviewed:

[The Shark Caller](#) [1]

Issue:

[246](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Val Randall](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice~~

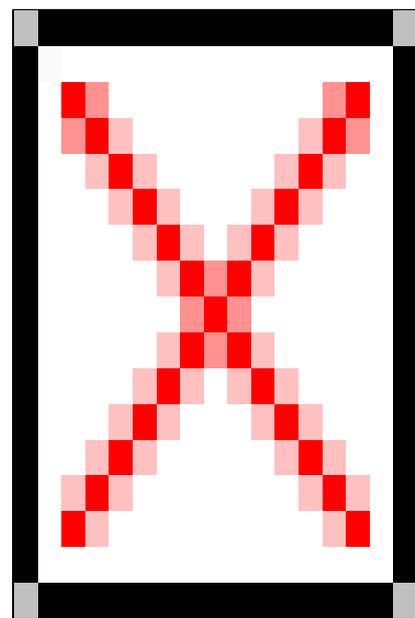
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5



Blue Wing's remote island home is all she has ever known, but it is beginning to change. Her parents were killed by the shark Xok and since then she has lived with the island's shark caller, Siringen. His wisdom and compassion and his deep respect for the old traditions have been subverted by Bigman, the island community's leader. When Western tourists visit the island with the intention of killing a shark as a trophy to take home, Siringen is forced by Bigman to take them to the shark roads and facilitate their kills. Bigman is interested only in bringing money to the island in order to increase his wealth and extend his already huge compound.

When Atlas and Maple Hamelin-a father and daughter-come from America and are installed in Blue Wing's family's former hut she is furious. She is given the responsibility of looking after Maple and out of mutual antagonism a strong friendship slowly grows. Maple's mother has recently died, too and this bond proves to be the starting point of their friendship.

Synchronicity is threaded through the narrative, as are the sharp contrasts between the old way of life, respecting nature,

taking care of the land, observing centuries-old traditions, and the new. Maple comes to see the island through Blue Wing's eyes, as does the reader, and there is a distinct sense of loss at the fading of the old ways and the introduction of western commercialisation in their place.

Blue Wing wants to learn how to summon Xok in order to kill him and avenge her parents. Atlas Hamelin is searching the ocean for a Japanese plane shot down in the 2nd World War, which he believes contains a document which will show him how to reverse time so that he can bring his wife back from the dead. Both plans fail to come to fruition and Blue Wing realises that Xok has only become a killer because of the cruelty inflicted on him when he was held captive by shark hunters.

Atlas Hamelin sees his precious document crumble to dust in the water and comes to understand that it is the living who matter-his daughter must be his priority now. Blue Wing forgives Xok and swims with him and it is then that the story takes a poignant and unexpected turn.

This is a book about love and loss and how to cope with them, about tradition and respect, about change and acceptance. It is one which should not be missed.

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