



Deep Blue Home: An Intimate Ecology of Our Wild Ocean

By Julia Whitty

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At the center of *Deep Blue Home*—a penetrating exploration of the ocean as single vast current and of the creatures dependent on it—is Whitty’s description of the three-dimensional ocean river, far more powerful than the Nile or the Amazon, encircling the globe. It’s a watery force connected to the earth’s climate control and so to the eventual fate of the human race.

Whitty’s thirty-year career as a documentary filmmaker and diver has given her sustained access to the scientists dedicated to the study of an astonishing range of ocean life, from the physiology of “extremophile” life forms to the strategies of nesting seabirds to the ecology of “whale falls” (what happens upon the death of a behemoth).

No stranger to extreme adventure, Whitty travels the oceanside and underwater world from the Sea of Cortez to Newfoundland to Antarctica. In the Galapagos, in one of the book’s most haunting encounters, she realizes: “I am about to learn the answer to my long-standing question about what would happen to a person in the water if a whale sounded directly alongside—would she, like a person afloat beside a sinking ship, be dragged under too?”

This book provides extraordinary armchair entree to gripping adventure, cutting-edge science, and an intimate understanding of our deep blue home.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Product Description

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A Q&A with Julia Whitty, Author of *Deep Blue Home*



Q: Where did *Deep Blue Home* come from?

A: I made nature documentaries about the oceans for years and my second book, *The Fragile Edge*, was a love letter to the coral reefs of the world. But in this book I wanted to circulate to the ocean's farthest fetch and depth and bring its stories and science ashore, so that people in the landlocked hearts of our continents would see how this water world gives us life.

Q: What did it take to write this book?

A: I've been traveling on and under the oceans since my teenage days, first in science, later in documentary filmmaking, and since 2000 as a writer. I've been fortunate to visit some of Earth's most wondrous wet places and meet the people working there, the biologists, oceanographers, fishermen, wilderness guides, and locals.

The book is called "an intimate ecology" because it's a very personal story of a life spent adrift on currents of curiosity and adventure.

Q: What kind of adventures have you had?

A: In my early science work, I was anchored to a tiny, remote, uninhabited island in Mexico's Sea of Cortez, home to half a million seabirds and nothing else. Filmmaking adventures took me all over the world, from diving with sperm whales off the Galapagos to diving on Arctic icebergs to experiencing the extremophile communities living below the reach of sunlight on the deep sea floor. Writing adventures have swept me out to sea in wild weather with scientists sampling the living pulse of the ocean as a way to measure changes underway from climate change.

Q: What inspires you about the ocean?

A: The seashore is a place of inspiration and introspection for many. Offshore the wonders only multiply. What we're learning today about the remote and deep ocean is bigger, deeper, darker, colder, farther, older than anything we could have imagined even 25 years ago. Technology combined with a growing lineage of scientific knowledge allows us to explore what we previously couldn't even imagine. We visit communities of life thriving thousands of feet below Antarctic ice. We follow pairs of mated seabirds flying 44,000-mile figure-eight loops around the Pacific between their nesting seasons. We magnify ocean water and find bacterial species in excess of 10 million.

Q: Do you have a favorite place in the ocean?

A: The beauty of the ocean is that it's profoundly connected by its constantly moving waters. Most ocean life is nomadic, at least for some stage of its development. Jellyfish drift through their adulthood yet are anchored to the seafloor when they're young. The opposite is true for many fish that inhabit a small corner of the seafloor in adulthood yet drift as plankton in their larval stages. The majority of sea life follows temperature gradients the way we follow roads and highways. Which means that a changing climate carries marine life with it. The ocean defies all our anchors.

Q: Do you consider the ocean your home?

A: The deep blue home is home to all of us no matter our address. We feel the gravitational pull of its tides and the spiritual lift of its infinite horizon. Today we understand that it's also the single most powerful arbiter of well-being for the seven billion human beings living on a small planet misnamed Earth. In my career on the water, I've witnessed some of the ocean's many miracles, absorbed its punishments, felt my way along the edges of its unexplored frontiers, dived with its musclemen and its ballerinas, sailed with its swashbucklers and exiles. Working beside scientists, I've learned to translate a word of two of the ocean's native tongues. The time I've spent at sea has also proven a brief yet decisive window into changes underway: oceanic problems, once local, now gone pandemic to compromise the equilibrium allowing us to flourish. Yet nature is beneficent too. For every reprimand from the deep blue home, we are offered a dozen forgivenesses. When we listen, we can hear its song of sustainability.

(Photo © Sharon Urquhart)

From Publishers Weekly

Mingling mythology with science, Whitty pulls readers into the watery depths of the oceans, home to the

birds, whales, and other mysterious creatures that have been her lifetime passion. She writes of Isla Rasa in the Gulf of California in Mexico during the short springtime breeding season, when the island mushrooms into a jittery cloud visible for miles; off the coast of Newfoundland, she encounters the annual migration of the icebergs, a spectacle as grand as the exodus of wildebeest through the Serengeti, and a leatherback sea turtle with flippers the size of oars, and a head like a draft horse's, wearing a jellyfish mane. Whitty's biology is colored by the gods of rock and the goddesses of seawater, such as Rasa, the Hindu mythical river flowing around the world, and the Elivágar, from the Viking creation story. This luminous prose is disturbed by accompanying reports of human-induced damage of oceanic ecosystems, where market economics relentlessly drives commercially desirable species towards extinction like a modern plague, exemplified by the collapse of the Newfoundland cod fishery, which caused a trophic cascade transforming all aspects of the ecosystem from crab to zooplankton to phytoplankton to nitrates. (*July*)

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Review

“A lovely, soft-spoken book about the ‘joy, inspiration, wonder, laughter, ideas’ that come from relating to Earth’s ‘nonhuman world.’”

—*Kirkus Review*

“Here is a writer of power and persuasion; one worthy of the Rachel Carson mantle. Whitty allows us to peer into the ecological web of the mysterious World Ocean, sharing her passion for the continuation of the ocean's life-essential fabric.”

—Linda Lear, author of *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*

“Rhythmic, poetic, transporting, and illuminating, this is the sacred memoir of a woman among islands of miracles, yearning with all her heart to be right where she is.”

—Carl Safina, author of *Song for the Blue Ocean, The View From Lazy Point*

“An illuminating exploration of the swirling currents connecting oceans, science, people, and history, bearing the reader on a unique voyage of discovery above and below the waves.”

—Daniel Bennett, President of The Explorers Club

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michelle Carlson:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what the ones you have problem? How about your time? Or are you busy man? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have free time? What did you do? All people has many questions above. They must answer that question because just their can do in which. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is right. Because start from on guardería until university need this kind of Deep Blue Home: An Intimate Ecology of Our Wild Ocean to read.

Jose Campbell:

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