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Read this book in one sitting: Claire Cameron's The Bear

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On a remote island in Ontario's Algonquin Park, a 300-pound black bear is decidedly not hibernating. Instead, he gruesomely attacks the campsite of a vacationing family, leaving five-year-old Anna and her two-year-old brother, whom Anna calls Sticky, to fend for themselves in the aftermath.

Claire Cameron's second novel, to be published early next month, is a taut and engrossing look at an essential web of connected questions: How children think, how families work, how we relate to nature at its most brutal and how we process grief and trauma.

After the kids emerge from the cooler in which they've ridden out the violence, an even more urgent question presents itself: How do they survive on their own? Their story is narrated by Anna, and Cameron proves masterly in the creation of a child's fractured world view, as familiar as it is unexpected, as observant as it is naive.

The result is ideal hibernation reading (obvious jokes about the title aside) – the sort of book you'll easily read in one sitting, but immediately regret having rushed through. Fortunately, Cameron's resonant plot and Anna's unforgettable voice add up to a novel destined to stay with you long after you've chewed through it.

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