

FOREWORD BY ANN BANCROFT

HUDSON BAY BOUND



TWO WOMEN, ONE DOG, TWO THOUSAND MILES TO THE ARCTIC



NATALIE

WARREN

A BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

for *HUDSON BAY BOUND: Two Women, One Dog, Two Thousand Miles to the Arctic*

by Natalie Warren, with a foreword by Ann Bancroft

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

“Ann and Natalie would be heralded for showing that adventure can still be had in a changing environment, and that women have not only a place in the landscape of adventure, but an important voice that needs to be heard. [Their] journey illuminates the physical landscapes, hardships, and human encounters; it also uncovers the heart of any good journey, the human spirit.”

—ANN BANCROFT, from the Foreword

“*Hudson Bay Bound* is a story of friendship forged on the river as two young women paddle 2,000 miles to the Arctic. With the candor and enthusiasm of a first grand adventure, Natalie Warren shares the joys and trials of living by water, propelled northward by muscle power and the belief that anything is possible.”

—CAROLINE VAN HEMERT, author of *The Sun is a Compass*

“Natalie Warren’s *Hudson Bay Bound* is part adventure-memoir, part nontraditional love story. Her adoration for the water and deep respect for the history of the land it weaves through is clear throughout the journey. Complemented by the intimacy of a friendship cultivated in motion, this is a refreshing, fun, and thoughtful read.”

—GALE STRAUB, author of *She Explores*

“Natalie and Ann’s story is classic example of how the exuberance of youth and a healthy dose of grit make any dream possible. From the foggy swirl of excitement as they launched their canoe into the flooded Minnesota River to their final paddle strokes down the Hayes River, *Hudson Bay Bound* provides a vivid account of an awesome adventure that we couldn’t put down.”

—AMY AND DAVE FREEMAN, authors of *A Year in the Wilderness*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Natalie Warren is a Minneapolis-based author, scholar, and public speaker on environmental issues. A lifelong paddler and river lover, she canoed the length of the Mississippi River and won first place in the Yukon River Quest in the women's voyageur division, paddling 450 miles in fifty-three hours. A contributing writer to outdoor publications, she has worked with Bancroft Arnesen Explore, St. Croix River Association, and River Management Society, and she started a nonprofit to present urban rivers as natural, dynamic classrooms for youth.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Unrelenting winds, carnivorous polar bears, snake nests, sweltering heat, and constant hunger. Paddling from Minneapolis to Hudson Bay, following the 2,000-mile route made famous by Eric Sevareid in his 1935 classic *Canoeing with the Cree*, Natalie Warren and Ann Raiho faced unexpected trials, some harrowing, some simply odd. But for the two friends—the first women to make this expedition—there was one timeless challenge: the occasional pitfalls that test character and friendship. Warren's spellbinding account retraces the women's journey from inspiration to Arctic waters, giving readers an insider view from the practicalities of planning a three-month canoe expedition to the successful accomplishment of the adventure of a lifetime.

Along the route we meet the people who live and work on the waterways, including denizens of a resort who supply much-needed sustenance; a solitary resident in the wilderness who helps plug a leak; and the people of the Cree First Nation at Norway House, where the canoeists acquire a furry companion. Describing the tensions that erupt between the women (who at one point communicate with each other only by note) and the natural and human-made phenomena they encounter—from islands of trash to waterfalls and a wolf pack—Warren brings us into her experience, and we join these modern women (and their dog) as they recreate this historic trip, including the pleasures and perils, the sexism, the social and environmental implications, and the enduring wonder of the wilderness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Natalie had never gone overnight camping before her two-week boundary waters trip in Minnesota, and it took her a long time to see herself as an outdoorswoman, even leading up to paddling to Hudson Bay. Often the identities we associate ourselves with, and even more so the ones we don't—"I'm not a writer," "I'm not an outdoorswoman," "I'm not an expert; I can't do that!"—keep us from trying new things. Do you feel comfortable going out of your comfort zone? How do you respond to the voices in your head that tell you who you are and what you are and are not capable of?
2. Both Ann and Natalie had fears about paddling to Hudson Bay. While outdoor expeditions are often romanticized, they knew they might encounter dangerous waters, wildlife (especially polar bears), and perhaps untrustworthy strangers. However, instead of focusing on all of the unknowns and what-ifs, they dedicated their energy to all the wonderful things that they might see and learn, which fueled their excitement and confidence. Our society loves to know what is coming next and what to expect. How do you approach the unknown future? What are the impacts of fear and doubt in those circumstances? What are the impacts of positive thought in moments of uncertainty?
3. "...I was afraid that I would lose the momentum to build my career after college. For others, that fear may involve leaving family and a job behind. It is a scary decision because we cannot predict how it will end and how it will change us. And it will change us. The most challenging part of an expedition is committing to do it—accepting the unknown changes that will inevitably occur in you and around you." The scholar Sara Ahmed discusses our obsession with "Happy Objects": the things that white culture has mutually agreed will bring joy, and therefore we are convinced they are worth pursuing (things like college, marriage, career, homeownership, kids, retirement, etc.), even when they may not actually make us happy. When Natalie and Ann chose to do their expedition, they felt unsure of what they were giving up by doing something out of the ordinary. Have you ever decided not to do something because you were supposed to be doing something else? How do you overcome pervasive and often harmful messages from society that keep us from pursuing unique endeavors?
4. Both Natalie and Ann had studied environmental and social issues in college. How did this trip expand their understanding of the world? What do you think they learned that they could not have fully understood by reading or talking about in a classroom setting? Oftentimes political decisions

are made based on statistics, data, and economics. How might the world be different if we actually witnessed environmental and social justice issues and put more value on the lived experiences of people most impacted?

5. What did you think of the email they received from the outdoor rep before their trip? Throughout the book, the paddlers find themselves in interactions where they wonder, “Is this happening because we are women?” What other moments can you recall from the book where the women were faced with sexism? Have you ever experienced a situation where you were left wondering, “did that happen because of my gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability?” How do you work through those emotions? How can we amplify those feelings to a broader political sphere for real equitable change?

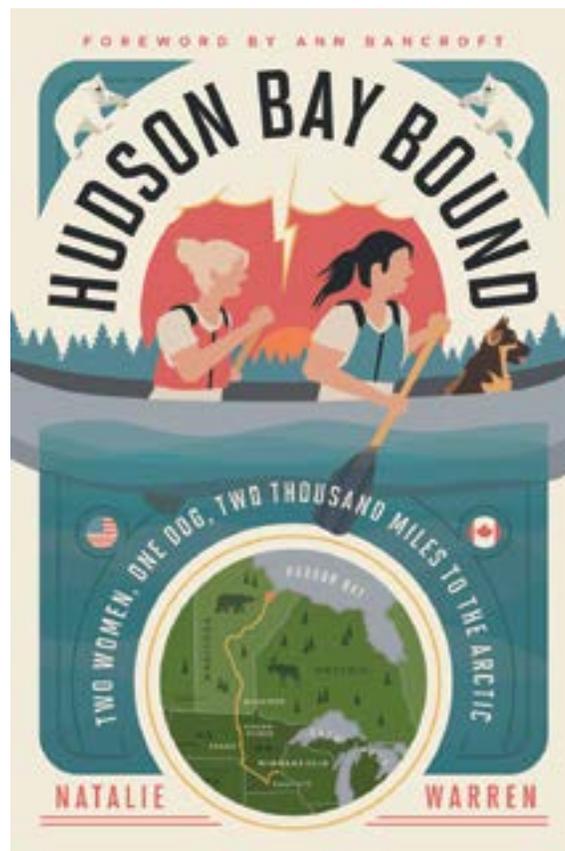
6. Ann and Natalie paddled connected waterways for nearly three months, encountering farms, dams, algal blooms, poor water quality, and pristine wilderness. What environmental lessons did they learn along the route? How do you feel about their encounters with environmental degradation?

7. Unspoken tensions build up to Ann and Natalie’s epic fight on Lake Winnipeg. What did you think of their evolving friendship throughout the book? What role do fights play in “pushing the ‘reset’ button?” How do you handle conflict in your relationships?

8. Natalie reflects on the emotional challenges of being windbound on Lake Winnipeg. While paddling all day was hard, not being able to paddle was insurmountably more challenging. Sometimes being forced to slow down can be harder than pushing ourselves to do more and to be busier. Have you had an experience where you lost power or control to do what you wanted to do? How did you handle that situation?

9. What did you think of Natalie and Ann’s decision to pick up a stray dog from Norway House? What would you have done?

10. In the afterword, Ann and Natalie reflect on the expedition, their relationship, and the impact the adventure had on their lives. What do you think about their reflection, nearly a decade after paddling to Hudson Bay? Have you ever experienced something so life-changing that you can look back



MORE INFO:

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