

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The introduction, discussion questions, suggested reading list and author information in this guide are intended to enhance your group's reading of Linda Greenlaw's *The Hungry Ocean: A Swordboat Captain's Journey*.

The Hungry Ocean is the tale of a fishing voyage on the *Hannah Boden*. The ship's captain, Linda Greenlaw, who is smart, hard-working and good at what she does, though sometimes she wishes she had a "life," tells us "the true story of a real, and typical, sword-fishing trip, from leaving the dock to returning." She rounds out the story with her description of a captain's biggest headache after nature itself: the crew. Racism, drug use, baffling illnesses: these are all elements of a 30-day journey for six people crammed aboard a 100-ft. boat designed less for human comfort than to carry the 50,000 pounds or more of fish it will eventually take on. But Greenlaw picks her sailors carefully and, through her own example, inspires loyalty from the crew. A *Publisher's Weekly* reviewer remarked: "Greenlaw's narrative should foster an abiding respect in anyone who has tossed a swordfish steak on the grill, and it is certain to induce jaw-dropping admiration among personnel managers everywhere."

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LINDA GREENLAW



One of few women involved in the commercial fishing industry, Linda Greenlaw is perhaps the only female ever to captain a swordfishing boat, working the waters east of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Although Linda has been fishing commercially for over two decades, she has only recently gained notoriety for her part in *The Perfect Storm* by Sebastian Junger. Starting out as a cook and deck-hand aboard a swordboat during summer breaks from college, Linda worked her way into the captain's chair by 1986. Linda has skippered boats from Newfoundland to Brazil and has enjoyed a number of fisheries—including swordfish, squid, halibut, lobster and crab. She has also worked her own boat inshore, lobstering the water surrounding her home on Isle au Haut, a small island off the coast of Maine.

Greenlaw describes herself as a woman, a fisherman, "a thirty-seven-year-old tomboy" who, after a wonderful childhood, "took seriously the assertions of my parents that I could do whatever I liked with my life, become anything I wanted!" Being a professional fisherman is not what they had in mind, but her success in her chosen profession is legendary.

Linda Greenlaw's three bestselling books about life as a commercial fisherman—*The Hungry Ocean* (her first book—1999), *The Lobster Chronicles* (2002) and *All Fishermen are Liars* (2004)—have climbed as high as #2 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. She is the winner of the U.S. Maritime Literature Award in 2003, and the New England Book Award for non-fiction in 2004. *Time Magazine* called her 2005 *Recipes from a Very Small Island*, co-authored with her mother Martha Greenlaw, a "must-have cookbook." She is also the author of the mystery novels *Slipknot* (2007), and *Fisherman's Bend* (2008).

THE HUNGRY OCEAN

READING GROUP

GUIDE

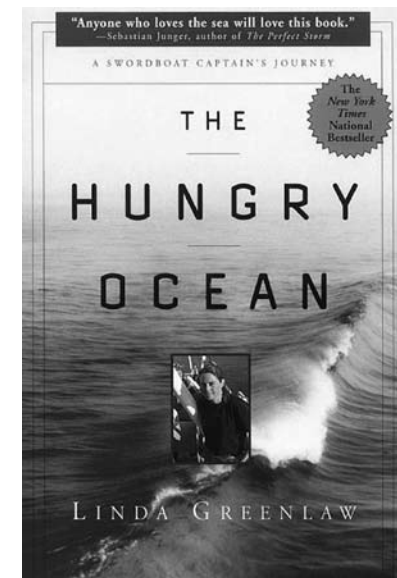
The Hungry Ocean: A Swordboat Captain's Journey

By Linda Greenlaw

Hyperion, New York, New York • © 1999

268 pp. • \$14.00

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Community Read facilitated discussion groups

March 9 (Tues.)	Hilltop Tavern	7:00 pm
March 10 (Wed.)	Courtyard Café Quincy Street	Noon
March 15 (Mon.)	Undertown Coffee Quincy Street	5:00 pm
March 17 (Wed.)	Northwest Maritime Ctr. Chandler Education Building	4:00 pm
March 17 (Wed.)	The Boiler Room Water Street	7:00 pm
March 23 (Tues.)	Port Townsend Library	7:00 pm

For discussion

1. The epigraph is an excerpt from Shakespeare's sonnet 64. The full sonnet is:

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the wat'ry main,
Increasing store with loss and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminat:
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

Why do you think Greenlaw took the title of her book from this sonnet?

2. The author seems to have admired Bob Brown partially because his expectations of her matched her own demands on herself. How do you think others' assessments of our capabilities affect our own?
3. Greenlaw downplays her gender, but also notes that her crew works hard because "no self-respecting fisherman will allow himself to be outworked by a woman." In what ways do you think that being a female may have actually helped her to become "one of the best sea captains, period, on the East Coast," as she was labeled by Sebastian Junger, author of *The Perfect Storm*?

4. What is the most demanding job you've had? What was the most satisfying job you've had? Was it the same job?
5. How do Linda Greenlaw's feelings about fishing compare to those of fictional characters in works such as *Moby Dick* or *The Old Man and the Sea*?
6. The author traces her fascination with the fishing life to watching a lobster boat in an Isle au Haut cove when she was 12. Was there such a defining event in your life, which led you to your career?
7. Being captain of a boat at sea for weeks at a time would test one's management skills. How would you assess Greenlaw's handling of the tension between Carl and Peter?
8. If you have had experience in West Coast commercial fishing, how do your experiences compare with those of the crew on the *Hannah Boden*?

Suggestions for further reading

GENERAL ADULT NONFICTION

- The Lobster Chronicles*, by Linda Greenlaw
All Fishermen are Liars, by Linda Greenlaw
The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea, by Sebastian Junger
Boxing the Compass (poetry), by Holly J. Hughes
Against the Tide: The Fate of the New England Fisherman, by Richard Adams Carey
Working the Sea: Misadventures, Ghost Stories and Life Lessons from a Maine Lobster Fisherman, by Wendell Seavey
Working on the Edge: Surviving in the World's Most Dangerous Profession: King Crab Fishing on Alaska's High Seas, by Spike Walker
Time Bandit: Two Brothers, the Bering Sea, and One of the World's Deadliest Jobs, by Andy and Johnathan Hillstrand
Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World, by Mark Kurlansky
Out On the Deep Blue: Women, Men and the Oceans They Fish, by Leslie Leyland Fields
Coastal Maine: A Maritime History, by Roger F. Duncan, et al.
The Last Fish Tale: The Fate of the Atlantic and Survival in Gloucester ..., by Mark Kurlansky

"SEAWORTHY WOMEN" ADULT NONFICTION

- The Captain's A Woman: Tales of a Merchant Mariner*, by Captain Deborah Dempsey
She Captains: Heroines and Hellions of the Sea, by Joan Druett
Winds of Change—Women in Northwest Commercial Fishing, by Charlene J. Allison
When God Was An Atheist Sailor: Memories of a Childhood at Sea, 1902-1910, by Burgess Cogill
Seafaring Women, by Linda Grant De Paew
Steady as She Goes: Women's Adventures at Sea, by Barbara Sjoholm

ADULT FICTION

- Slipknot*, by Linda Greenlaw
Fishermen's Bend, by Linda Greenlaw
The Fisherman's Son, by Joseph M. Orlando (Gloucester, ME)
The Fisherman's Son, by Michael Koepf (Half Moon Bay, CA)
The Width of the Sea, by Michelle Chalfoun
Commercial Fishermen of Alaska series, by Michael McCloskey (*Highliners; Raiders; Breakers*)

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

- The Great Wide Sea*, by M.H. Herlong
Bloody Jack (first in a series), by L.A. Meyer
Pirates!: the True and Remarkable Adventures of Minerva Sharpe and Nancy Kington, Female Pirates, by Celia Rees
Captains Courageous, by Rudyard Kipling

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

- Cod's Tale*, by Mark Kurlansky ; illustrated by S.D. Schindler
Dove, by Robin L. Graham

CHILDREN'S CHAPTER BOOKS—FICTION

- The True Adventures of Charlotte Doyle*, by Avi
Williwaw! By Tom Bodett
Leaving Protection, by Will Hobbs
A Sailor Returns, by Theodore Taylor
Swallows and Amazons series, by Arthur Ransome
The Wanderer, by Sharon Creech