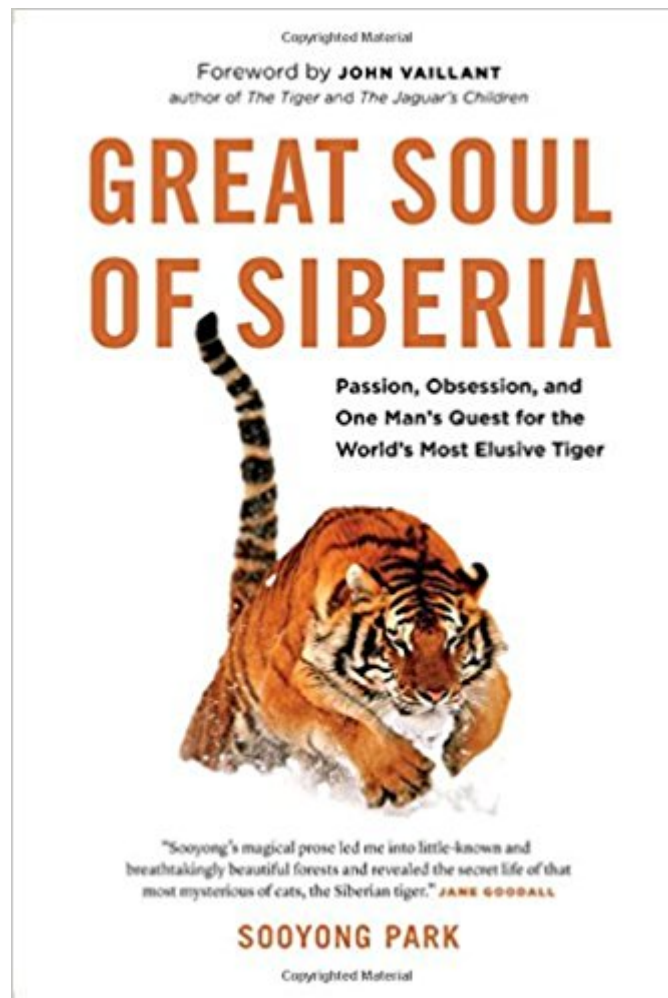




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# Great Soul Of Siberia: Passion, Obsession, And One Man's Quest For The World's Most Elusive Tiger



## Synopsis

In *The Great Soul of Siberia*, renowned tiger researcher Sooyong Park tracks three generations of Siberian tigers living in remote southeastern Russia. Reminiscent of the way Timothy Treadwell (the so-called Grizzly Man) immersed himself in the lives of bears, Park sets up underground bunkers to observe the tigers, living thrillingly close to these beautiful but dangerous apex predators. At the same time, he draws from twenty years of experience and research to focus on the Siberian tigers' losing battle against poaching and diminishing habitat. Over the two years of his harrowing stakeout, Park's poignant and poetic observations of the tigers draw a fiercely compassionate portrait of these elusive, endangered creatures.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Great Soul of Siberia is the most intimate, poetic and immersive investigation of the Siberian tiger ever written." —John Vaillant, author of *The Tiger and The Jaguar's*

Children" Sooyong's magical prose led me into little-known and breathtakingly beautiful forests, exposed me to the bitter cold of long winter months, and revealed the secret life of that most mysterious of cats, the Siberian tiger." —Jane Goodall

"An astonishingly intimate peek into a family of the greatest of cats, and a man in love with watching them. Sooyong Park has felt the breath of a wild Siberian Tiger on his cheek, and so will you." —Will Stolzenburg, author of *Where the Wild Things Were* "... a remarkable, and heart-rending story written by a poet whose own soul permeates each page." —Heather Dune Macadam, author of *Rena's Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz* "A beautiful book, and the best account of Siberian tigers I've read."

Park's remarkable first-hand observations of a wild tiger family contain the wisdom of his years of experience and are written with great verve, intelligence, dedication, and understanding." #151;Jeffrey Masson, author of *Beasts and When Elephants Weep*"A beautifully patient, deep-textured exploration of an unknown part of the world and its ancient guardian, the majestic Amur tiger, by a wonderfully empathetic naturalist." #151;Ruth Padel, author of *Tigers in Red Weather*"To read *Great Soul of Siberia* is to go deep into the tiger's mysterious Russian realm with an expert guide. Thanks to author Sooyong Park's vivid prose, you will feel extremes of cold and fear, triumph and heartbreak. And you will be helpless against falling in love, as he did, with the tiger's wild magnificence." #151;J.A. Mills Author of *Blood of the Tiger*"This book is an unbelievably gripping account of one man's laser-focused determination to find, film, and understand one of the rarest and most formidable cats on earth. Not only is Sooyong Park's story astonishing; it's also shared with such intense emotion that you feel you're right there with him." #151;Chris Morgan, Ecologist, host of PBS *Siberian Tiger Quest*"A heartfelt memoir that reflects the author's respect and love for a wild and pitiless world." #151;Kirkus Reviews"The rigour and sincerity of [Park's] philosophy distinguishes *The Great Soul of Siberia* even in the present age of Emerson-inflected transcendentalist nature writing. ...Park's close engagement with the forest ecology is the most extraordinary element of this remarkable book." #151;New Statesman

An award-winning documentary filmmaker, Sooyong Park has devoted over twenty years to studying and filming Siberian tigers. A film about him, *Siberian Tiger Quest*, aired on PBS and won Best Cinematography (a tie) at the 2013 International Wildlife Film Festival. He lives in Seoul, Korea. John Vaillant's work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *National Geographic* among other magazines. His books, *The Tiger* and *The Golden Spruce*, were international bestsellers. His most recent book, *The Jaguar's Children* is his first novel. He lives in Vancouver.

I loved this book and highly recommend it. Mr Park writes beautifully about the balance of nature. It's heartbreaking and inspiring. I learned a lot by his gentle, well thought out narrative flow and careful presentation about mice, eagles, raccoons . . . . I have so much gratitude towards him for telling his story and letting me feel like I was there observing, listening and being in the forest. Also, for sharing a Siberian tiger's day to day life, their intelligence and the hardships that they face in our modern world. Everything truly is connected except regrettably humans.

Haunting book, well worth reading.

You can experience the same emotions as you read the words. A wonderful depiction of the life of tigers and those who vow to protect them. Hopefully they will live on for years to come so we have more than just words and pictures to learn from.

Such a great book! It follows naturalist Sooyong Park as he trails tigers; without a weapon of any kind.

Read this book before reading the tiger by John Valiant. It goes so well with the timeline of tigers in siberia.

I ran across this book at my library, and I'm glad that I did. It's the best book I have read about tigers (of maybe seven or eight). Park's writing, even in translation, has an immediacy and passion for these animals. He's a filmmaker and the book largely concerns his efforts to get usable footage. It's a first-person narrative style, and the focus is on three generations of tigers in a Russian preserve in the Russian Far East, close to China and Korea. Female tigers first breed at three, so the book covers about ten years. Much of the book is Park's observing from small bunkers, very cramped den-like places that he lived in for six months at a time. His descriptions of building these, trying to make them inconspicuous, and living in them is fascinating. Day after day after day of cold and boredom punctuated now and then by intense excitement. Once four tigers tried to dig him out (they routinely destroy camouflaged gun traps among other things). In this incident Park's life was in real danger. Park had installed cameras for a decade; tigers found and destroyed 23 of them. The book also amounts to a biography of several tigers, and has a good deal of information about the native people (non-Russian aboriginal peoples, that is). It also provides some rather depressing context. The preserve is subject to heavy poaching, mostly local people who are poor, but also tiger killers, because a dead tiger is worth tens of thousands of dollars--its bones, and body parts are valued for traditional Chinese medicinal practice. While Park's research areas were remote wilderness, the reach of crime from regional cities extends, and Park mentions he was harassed when he refused to cooperate. There's also a chapter on how his team forged friendships with local people, a necessity. I found several chapters to be particularly interesting. Chapter 11 describes building the bunkers, and chapter 15 describes living in them. Chapter 16 contains the incident when four tigers try to dig him out of one (they may not have realized a live human was inside). And Chapter 18

describes forging friendships with the local people. There's also a good section of photos. The book has considerable emotional impact when Park describes the death of several of the tigers. And most depressing of all, the future of these tigers looks grim.

I have read many books about wild animals in my lifetime. No book has affected me like this one. Park is so in tune with his environment. Instead of using high tech gadgets such as GPS collars and remote video cameras, Park observed the tigers of Ussuri, in the extreme southeastern edge of Siberia, from crude bunkers measuring only 2 X 2 1.8 meters, where he stayed for 2 months at a time, often in subzero temperatures. He was able to observe the tigers intimately. I was in tears much of the time reading this book. For the tigers, whose deaths were all caused directly or indirectly by humans. For the landscape. For the traditional lives of the native people. For our planet and the natural world.

To read this book is to fall in love with three generations of Siberian Tigers, whose cubs we come to care for as deeply as we care for our own children. With the kind of courage these great cats embody, Sooyong Parks endures the loneliness and cold of the Siberian winter in order to reveal the world of these secretive creatures and he delivers them to us with the lyric beauty of a modern-day Thoreau. The Great Soul of Siberia is a remarkable, and heart-rending story written by a poet whose own soul permeates each page. Heather Dune Macadam, author of *Rena's Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz*

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