

BRUCE SMITH



LEGEND KEEPERS

THE CHOSEN ONE



A middle-grade novel by award-winning science writer and wildlife biologist, Bruce Smith.

In a perilous place at the roof of the world, an orphaned mountain goat is rescued from certain death by a mysterious raven. Communication between a mountain goat and raven might seem strange. But what becomes more unreachable is Buddy's realization that she alone can save a band of goats from the great danger foretold in an ancient legend.

This brilliant tale with a clever mix of discovery will spark the intellectual curiosity of every reader.

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REVIEWS

Coming soon.

EXCERPT

In the slanting sunlight, a shadow passed. Mom shoved Buddy beneath her belly. That's when the shrieks pierced her ears.

"Yelp! Yelp! Yelp! Yelp! Yelp!"

Rocketing toward them was a menacing sight. Carried on wings that spread seven feet wide, it was so much larger than the croaking ravens whose acrobatics entertained her.

It screamed again, "Yelp! Yelp! Yelp!" Daring a peek, she saw the bird tuck its wings. It wheeled toward them with such power that she felt faint.

"Stay beneath me, no matter what." Jolted by the alarm in her mother's voice, she snapped back to attention. Mom tossed her head in the air as if to challenge the predator. *Whoooooosh!* came the blast of air as the attacker veered at the moment Mom leapt to her hind legs to meet it. As it turned, she shook her head, "Get out of here. You've met your match in this mountain goat!"

When her mom stepped clear, the eagle had vanished. She turned her head to her wide-eyed kid, "That golden eagle could bat a small goat like you off a ledge. And it's just one of many dangers here. But I will teach you the ways of the mountains. How to take care of yourself. Until then, I'll protect and keep you safe."

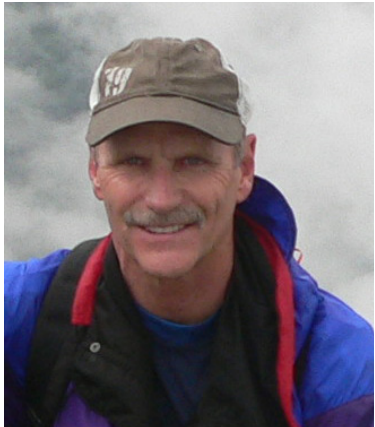
Walking back to the sheltering wall, Buddy clung so near that her nose buried in her mom's shoulder hair. She inhaled its reassuring scent—lanolin with a hint of vanilla.



Her life had begun much like other baby mountain goats. But her dreams that night of screaming eagles with outstretched talons and rocks clattering over the ledge shook her.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: BRUCE SMITH



Bruce Smith is a wildlife biologist who holds a PhD in Zoology. During his career with the federal government, he studied and managed most large mammal species that roam the western United States.

He's authored five nonfiction books of natural history, conservation, and outdoor adventure.

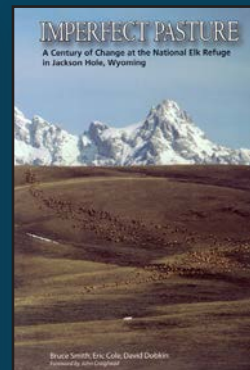
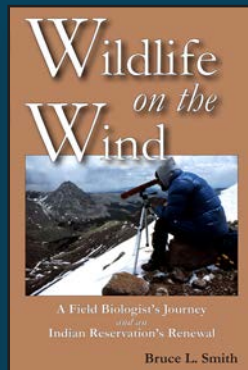
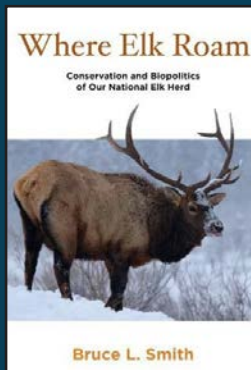
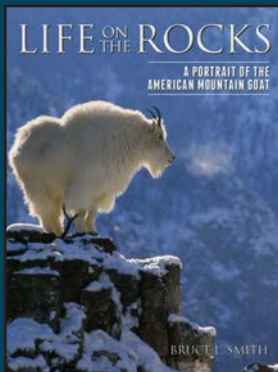
He spent three years studying mountain goats in Montana's Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area — and many days afield with binoculars and camera since — which provided an enduring affection for the subject of

Life on the Rocks: A Portrait of the Mountain Goat, winner of the National Outdoor Book Award.

In *Legend Keepers*, his first novel, he draws upon his experiences and fascination with wild animals to stir the imaginations of young readers and immerse them in the natural world.

Bruce and his wife, Diana, live in southwest Montana not far from mountain goats.

Other books by Bruce Smith:



Learn more about Bruce Smith at www.brucesmithwildlife.com

Q&A WITH AUTHOR, BRUCE SMITH

What makes your book different from others in the same genre?

I'm unaware of any children's novels written about a mountain goat. It's also different because the story, while written to entertain, is woven with a subtext about climate change as a means to educate and engage readers through animals whose lives are now being affected by their rapidly changing environment.

Fan readers of which authors/books do you think would enjoy this title and why?

The Last Bear by Hannah Gold, *A Wolf Called Wander* by Rosanne Parry, *Pax* by Sara Pennypacker, *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate, the *Bravelands* series by Erin Hunter, *Guardians of Ga'Hoole* series by Kathryn Lasky

What inspired you to write this book?

The idea for *Legend Keepers* leapt from the pages of my nonfiction book about mountain goats, *Life on the Rocks*. I was dismayed that few children attended my book events. In an Aha! moment, I thought a novel for young readers about the lives of mountain goats, and other animals of the alpine zone, that few people see or know about. These species suffer from conservation neglect and need an ardent following, children included. Perhaps especially children.

How did you develop the main character, Buddy?

Just as the main human characters in middle-grade novels are children, I wanted my story's protagonist to be a juvenile. However, like most animals, mountain goats mature fast. An eleven- or twelve-year old is an "old goat" and unlikely to live much longer. Because mountain goat kids are so dependent upon their mothers the first year of life, I chose to make Buddy an orphan. She loses her mother when very young — tragic but not improbable for a species that spends its life on mountainsides. Without a mother, her story of hope, courage, and triumph becomes possible.

What led you to leap into the world of fiction?

Legend Keepers: The Chosen One is my first effort to create a children's novel with an environmental subtext. I remain hopeful about the future of humans, our planet, and Earth's biological diversity because of the aspirations and activism I see in children. I want to nourish that and kindle the passion of my readers.



What three words describe you?

Purposeful, patriotic, and passionate

Where did you grow up?

North Muskegon, Michigan, near a lake, a marsh, and a woods

If you could compare yourself with any animal, which would it be and why?

I would be a mountain goat (as you must have guessed!). I admire the places they roam and the patient and resolute way in which they live their lives. If a bird, I'd want to be an American kestrel. Why? Just watch one for a while!

What topics, NOT related to your book, do you feel qualified to discuss when promoting your book?

Wildlife and wildland conservation, climate change

What book is currently on your bedside table?

The Madhouse Effect by Michael E. Mann, *The Silver Arrow* by Lev Grossman

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Debut Novel by Wildlife Biologist, Bruce Smith

MAY 20, 2021

Bozeman, MONTANA– *Legend Keepers: The Chosen One* by science writer and wildlife biologist, Bruce Smith, will officially release to the public on August 24, 2021.

Legend Keepers: The Chosen One is book one in a series for middle-grade readers. As Smith's debut work of fiction, this novel weaves together his extensive knowledge of mountain goats and other alpine zone animals with his passion for reaching audiences through captivating story telling.

Bruce Smith of Bozeman, Montana, is a wildlife biologist who holds a PhD degree in zoology. During his career as a federal government scientist, he studied and managed most large mammal species that roam the western United States. He has authored five nonfiction books of natural history, conservation, and outdoor adventure.

Legend Keepers: The Chosen One is published by Hidden Shelf Publishing House.

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ABOUT HIDDEN SHELF PUBLISHING HOUSE

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For the past few decades, literary agents and editors have been frustrated that big publishing houses — when considering fiction — don't want to take a chance on unknown authors. Of course, when a writer does manage to publish something different that finds success, other publishers rush to imitate.

In fact, the fate of great literature is now being decided in corporate board rooms based on accounting projections.

"They will print Lady Gaga's autobiography," says one literary agent, "but snub the next Ernest Hemingway."

Based in Idaho, Hidden Shelf is an independent publishing house founded in 2017 with the goal of providing wonderful and creative works to an audience of passionate readers. We focus on unique stories, extraordinary writers.

Learn more at www.hiddenshefpublishinghouse.com

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