

Bear V Shark



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著者:Chris, Bachelder

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Given a relatively level playing field -- i.e., water deep enough so that a shark could maneuver proficiently but shallow enough so that a bear could stand and operate with its characteristic dexterity -- who would win in a fight between a bear and a shark? In this fiercely funny, razor-sharp satire of our media-saturated culture, the sovereign nation of Las Vegas is host to Bear v. Shark II. After a disappointing loss in the first computer-generated match-up, the bear is out for blood. With an essay entitled "Bear v. Shark: A Reason to Live," young Curtis Norman wins a national contest and four tickets to the sold-out event. As the Normans head cross-country in their SUV, they encounter a dizzying barrage of voices weighing in on the upcoming spectacle -- everyone from the Freudians, theologians, pundits, and self-published authors on the radio to the bear and shark fanatics, cultists, and resisters at pit stops along the way. Overwhelmed by factoids and ten-second debates, Mr. Norman grows ambivalent about the impending event and the family with whom he can't seem to connect. Still, the Normans push on to Vegas, toward an apocalyptic, surprisingly emotional ending.

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