

= Seekers (novel series) =

Seekers is a children 's novel series written by a team of authors under the pseudonym Erin Hunter , who also wrote the Warriors series . Seekers follows the adventures of four bear cubs : Kallik (a polar bear) , Lusa (a black bear) , Ujurak (a small grizzly bear who can shape @-@ shift into any animal) , and Toklo (also a grizzly bear) . Led by Ujurak , the four bears search for a place where they can live in peace without human interference and harassment . The first book The Quest Begins was released on May 27 , 2008 and was followed by Great Bear Lake , Smoke Mountain , The Last Wilderness , Fire in the Sky , and Spirits in the Stars , released on February 8 , 2011 . The series has been well received , with critics praising the realistic behavior of the characters , the excitement in the novels , and the descriptions of the bears ' world .

= = Inspiration and origins = =

Similarly to the Warriors series , Seekers began as a request from HarperCollins to Victoria Holmes to develop another series about a group of animals , but not cats . Dogs were considered , but rejected because they were too close to cats in their hierarchical social organization , pack and hunting lifestyles , and territoriality . This was expressed by Victoria Holmes later in an online chat , where she stated that she " was reluctant to create stories that ... would be quite similar to Warriors . Dogs live in packs , they hunt for their food , they have a strict hierarchy within their communities , they guard their territories " . Horses , otters and dolphins were considered , but were dismissed : Holmes felt that horses tended to run away rather than stay and fight , and that dolphin battles would be slow without " the all @-@ action excitement that Erin loves so much " . In the end , the company left the decision to Holmes and she opted for bears ; in the later author chat she notes that bears " live much more solitary lifestyles than cats , they are wild through and through with no history of domestication whatsoever (performing bears don 't count) , and they are much bigger animals , with a whole lot more potential for fighting " . The series took inspiration from Inuit beliefs and Native American languages . Holmes found that Native Americans and bears are very closely linked to the natural environment . The names of the bears are taken from several different Indian languages . Lusa , for example , means " black " in Choctaw .

Holmes drew inspiration from Inuit beliefs and the Native American languages which are spoken in the area which the bears live . Holmes developed Ujuark 's shape @-@ shifting powers after reading up on shamans , who are supposed to be able to transform into other animals . Holmes liked the idea and decided to have one of the bears have the same ability , which allowed him to " infiltrate a human community without them guessing the truth . " Later , Holmes " needed to establish what sort of beliefs each bear would have , " so after finding that bears are closely linked to their environment just like Native Americans , Holmes centered her research around the Natives . The names of the bears are from Native American languages ; Lusa means midnight or black in Choctaw , while Kallik means lightning in Inuktitut , Silaluk means storm in Inuktitut , Taqqiq means moon , Toklo means two in Chicksaw , and Ujurak means rock .

= = Books = =

= = = First series = = =

The series takes place over the span of six books , which are : The Quest Begins , Great Bear Lake , Smoke Mountain , The Last Wilderness , Fire in the Sky , and Spirits in the Stars . The story follows four young bears . Lusa , a black bear , Kallik , a polar bear , Toklo , a grizzly bear and Ujurak , who is able to shape @-@ shift into any animal , but remains a brown bear most of the time .

The first book , The Quest Begins , shows how each of the four bears are either abandoned or separated from their parents . Kallik is separated from her mother and brother when a pod of orcas (

killer whales) eat her mother , while her brother was still on the other side of the canal , thinking they were both dead . After this , Kallik travels to find her brother . Toklo is abandoned by his mother after his brother , Tobi , dies and his mother sees how the salmon is disappearing , and left Toklo to travel alone . Lusa was born and raised in a zoo . Her story intertwines with Toklo 's after his mother is brought to the zoo and Lusa hears of the wild . Hoping to leave her home , she escapes the zoo and looks for Toklo . Meanwhile , Toklo finds Ujurak injured and helps him ; they begin to travel together . They meet up with Lusa at the end of the book . By Great Bear Lake , the four bears have joined together and they try to go to the Arctic . Although Kallik finds her brother Taqqiq , he has joined a group of bullying bears who kidnap a black bear cub . Taqqiq sees that what he did was wrong and joins the questing bears but he soon leaves the group in the third book when he feels he does not belong with them . The remaining four cubs learn of a place called the Last Great Wilderness in the third book , where there is plentiful food and shelter . After defying hardships such as hunger and bear hunters , they finally make it to the Last Great Wilderness . However , even though they are there , Ujurak , who leads the journey , feels that they need to go further , into the Arctic . In *Fire in the Sky* , the bears leave the Last Great Wilderness and travel towards the Arctic . In the sixth and final book of the first series , *Spirits in the Stars* , the four bears make it to Star Island , a place where many polar bears live . They find a sick mother polar bear and her cub . The mother dies from sickness and the four bears look after her cub . Toklo finds that he also struggles with his urge to become a brown bear and travel alone . The bears save the polar bears that inhabit Star Island by destroying an oil rig that was poisoning the seals that they eat , but Ujurak dies in an avalanche while saving the others . Yakone , a young white bear who lived on the strange Star Island with the sick bears , is added to the group of bears on the last page of the book .

== Return to the Wild ==

The series takes place over the span of six books , five of which have been released . The books that have been released to date in this series are *Return to the Wild : Island of Shadows* , *Return to the Wild : The Melting Sea* , *Return to the Wild : River of Lost Bears* , *Return to the Wild : Forest of Wolves* , *Return to the Wild : The Burning Horizon* , and *Return to the Wild : The Longest Day* . The story follows Toklo , Kallik , Lusa , and Yakone as they return home but struggle between leaving the only family they 've ever known or returning home , where they haven 't been for so long .

== Other books ==

Seekers has also been published in original English @-@ language manga form . The books are drawn by Bettina Kurkoski , who also drew *The Rise of Scourge* . The first one , Toklo 's Story , was released on February 9 , 2010 , the same day *The Last Wilderness* was released . The second , featuring Kallik , called *Kallik 's Adventure* was released on February 8 , 2011 . The third one was going to be called *Lusa 's Tale* , But Tokyopop , the graphic novel company , decided not to make any more books for the USA . Unless Erin Hunter creates it herself , the book may not come out at all .

== Themes ==

The main theme emphasized in the series is the environment . Holmes says that by " coming up with a series about a different animal gave me a chance to explore some themes that don 't fit so easily into *Warriors* . In particular , the environment . " Holmes says that she has always been keen on recycling and saving the planet so she wanted to explore the ways bears and other animals might react to humans destroying their homes and habitats . Many reviewers have picked up the theme . *Publishers Weekly* found that " readers will appreciate the bears ' struggle to survive , along with Hunter 's environmental theme . " *Booklist* also commented on each separate story of the three bears touch on environmental problems and issues . *School Library Journal* noted that " The bears ' declining habitat is evident , and often throughout their journey the animals have to dodge cars and

humans with guns . "

A review from Children 's Literature picked up the environmental theme , but commented on themes such as " youth versus age , new versus tradition and the discovery that foreign others are often not very different from oneself . " This also ties into a theme of racism noted by a Kidreads.com reviewer . He notes that " [Hunter] also cleverly deals with the theme of racism through a unique and honest approach ? three bears of different color , different backgrounds and different beliefs turn to each other for survival and friendship . " Despite differences between the bears they still work together .

= = Publication history = =

The first series contains a total of six books . It was originally to be called " The Clawed Path , " as the journey the four bears make through all six books in the series is referred to as " the clawed path . " At the very last moment , the title was changed so that it would look similar to the Warriors series . Holmes was initially unhappy with the change , but has since said that she has come to like it and the way it looks on the books .

The first novel of the series , The Quest Begins , was first featured on the HarperCollin 's FirstLook Program in November 2007 . Readers who signed up for the program had a chance to read an early edition of this book , an Advanced Reader 's Copy , before it was published in stores . The Quest Begins was released in the US on May 27 , 2008 . The book was also released as a paperback on February 10 , 2009 and an e @-@ book on October 6 , 2009 . The US has published the fifth book and published the sixth on February 8 , 2011 .

The books have also been released in the UK and Canada . Canada received the first book on May 25 , 2008 . Canada has published up to the sixth book . The UK releases have different covers than the Canadian and US covers . In the UK , only the first , second , third and fourth books were released . The first three books have also been translated into Russian .

= = Critical reception = =

Seekers has received generally positive reviews . Publishers Weekly praised the suspenseful ending of the first book and thought readers would find great interest in the bears ' struggle to survive . Booklist found the plot of the first book to have an " interesting balance of cute anthropomorphic characterization and realistic attention to bear behaviors . " School Library Journal wrote " from the first page , this story is exciting and refreshing " and " [t] he plot is fast paced , and the author is apt at creating and sustaining the adrenaline @-@ charged mood of these youngsters on their own . " Kirkus Review found that " Hunter creates a richly sensuous world filled with cruelty , beauty , tenderness , savagery and just enough underlying legendary background to add mystery . " However , the reviewer also felt that too much detail went into developing the characters and setting and there was very little plot . In a review for the second and third books , Horn Book Review felt that readers might experience some confusion about the mountain , but they would still enjoy the fantasy adventure and the descriptions of the animals .