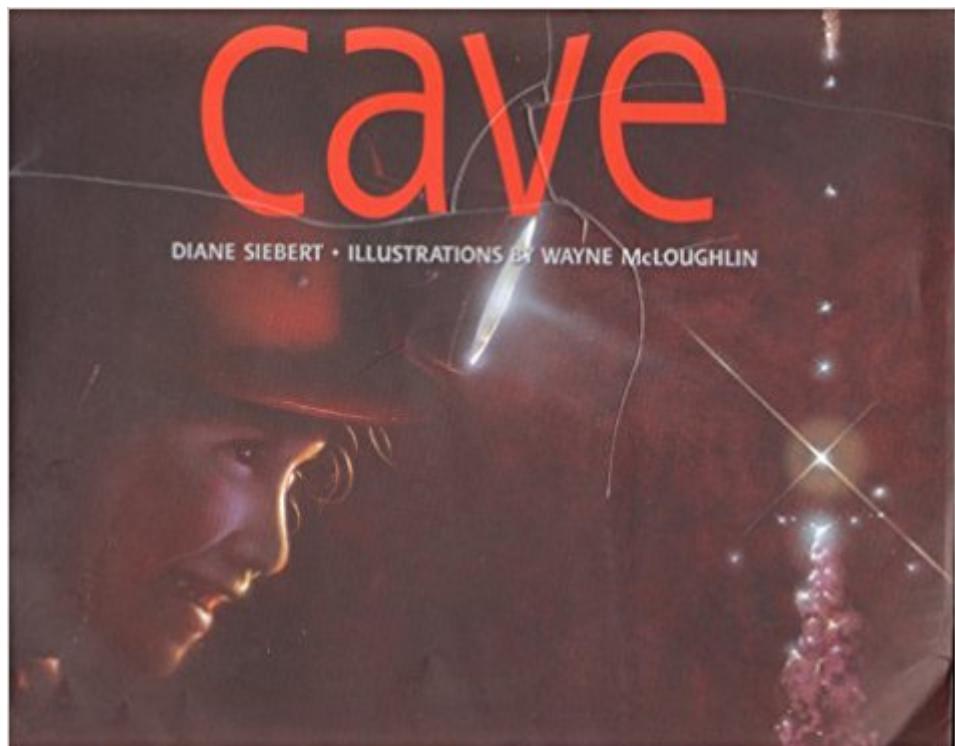


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## Cave



## **Synopsis**

I am the cave, So cool and dark, Where time, unending, Leaves its mark. The mazes of the cave reach back, from bright to darkest dark. Step through the sunny entrance and what treasures you'll find--colonies of bats sheltering in the dim light, deep chambers decorated with majestic columns of crystallized rock, and secret worlds where pale, blind creatures live by hearing, touch, and smell. All these and more await the reader of this stunning collaboration, in which Diane Siebert's rich, evocative text and Wayne McLoughlin's luminous paintings capture the magical, mysterious underground world of caves.

## **Book Information**

Age Range: 6 and up

Hardcover

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## **Customer Reviews**

Is there anyone who is not fascinated--and even a little frightened--by the dark, enfolding world of a cave? Matching Wayne McLoughlin's exquisitely detailed, full-color paintings with Diane Siebert's elegant rhymed verse, this lovely volume introduces young readers to speleology. Told from the point of view of a cave that could be located just about anywhere on the planet, the text ranges from easy couplets to more extensive poetic passages that incorporate lessons in such matters as how stalactites and stalagmites form and the kinds of animals that make their homes in the subterranean depths, from crayfish to mites and "troglophiles." The language may prove challenging to some younger readers ("And through the eons I evolved, / My limestone, bit by bit, dissolved / By Nature's forces intertwined"), but with some friendly adult coaching, this makes for a fine vocabulary-building

primer, providing enough context to define such daunting terms as technology and anteroom. Older readers, too, will appreciate the author's careful presentation and the artist's images of spiders, underground chambers, and other natural features. Siebert closes with a plea to preserve caves and the creatures that inhabit them, providing a gentle lesson in environmentalism to accompany the less value-charged science. (Ages 4 and older) --Gregory McNamee

Poetry flows from Siebert's (Mojave; Heartland) pen as she once again personifies a natural setting: "I am the cave,/ So cool and dark,/ Where time, unending, leaves its mark/ As natural forces build and hone/ A crystal world from weeping stone." Tracing the history of limestone caves from their origins as ocean beds to their many beautiful formations, such as stalactites and stalagmites, helictites and flowstone, she also observes the creatures who inhabit them. Trogloxenes such as snakes, porcupines and skunks "feed outside/ But venture in to rest, to hide," while troglophiles such as the salamander and wingless cricket "remain within where they can shun/ All hint of day, all trace of sun." Siebert conveys a sense of astonishment at the cave's many wonders, her verse as informative as it is lyrical. McLoughlin's (Here Is the Wetland) acrylics offer an impressive balance between the eerie magnetism of the cave's inner workings and the almost surreal effect of emerging from the darkness to the outside world. This volume serves as a spelunker's delight and a novice's introduction. All ages. (Aug.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I love Diane Siebert's poetic picture books. Her poetry is always fun to read, her content is always accurate, and she always has the best illustrators working with her. Cave may be her best book yet. Any child hearing or reading this extended poem will learn about limestone caves from the formation of the original layer of limestone to the actions of humans on the caves [both beautiful (neolithic cave paintings) and destructive (the destruction and removal of cave formations)]. The book contains the fun kinds of multisyllabic words that kids like to learn and say - words like stalactite, stalagmite, and troglophiles - and includes a pronunciation guide at the end of the book. The book includes an author's note at the end that provides a little more background for the adult reader. I highly recommend that you get a copy of this wonderful picture book for your favorite young reader.

Another Diane Siebert book, "Sierra," was recommended in a university program on childrens' literacy. In searching for that book I found, "Cave," which is even more engaging. The content of these books is very educational for adults and children, and their poetry and illustrations make the subject matter both simple and mature. This series is marvelous for children of any age. In these

books, the authors take the readers to a place where non-fiction meets artistry. I'm reading them to my 10-month old daughter now and expect her to get more and more out of them each year she grows older. If you think you're an expert on caves, make sure you know the difference between trogloxenes, trolophiles, and troglobites. Ooh, that's a tough one.

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