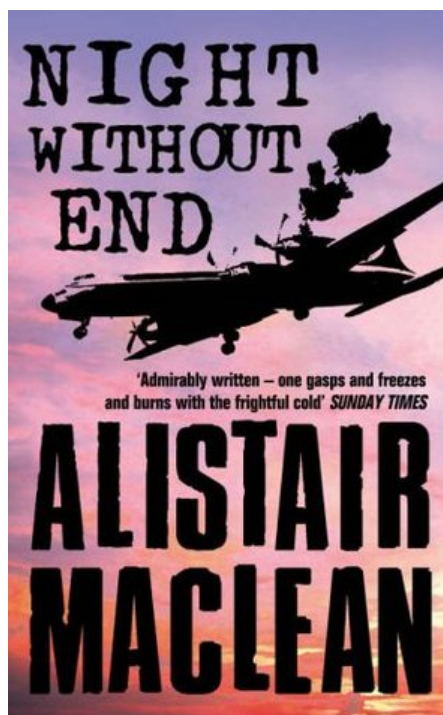




Night Without End

Alistair MacLean

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From the acclaimed master of action and suspense. The all time classic. An airliner crashes in the polar ice-cap. In temperatures 40 degrees below zero, six men and four women survive. But for the members of a remote scientific research station who rescue them, there are some sinister questions to answer -- the first one being, who shot the pilot before the crash?

Night Without End Details

Date : Published 1980 by Fontana (first published 1959)

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Author : Alistair MacLean

Format : Paperback 221 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Adventure, Mystery, Action, Crime

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From Reader Review Night Without End for online ebook

Graeme Shimmin says

When an airliner crash lands in Greenland near a remote scientific base, the main scientist has to lead the survivors on a desperate march to safety through the bitter cold. When he discovers that two of the survivors were responsible for the crash, and have already murdered several people, he has to try and discover their identities before they can kill everyone and escape.

I somewhat enjoyed this arctic survival action novel with a strong mystery element. It has some well described survival/action sequences, mostly of the crew struggling through the snow and cold, desperately trying to keep their ancient tractor going, and the the twists, cliffhangers and red-herrings keep coming.

However, like all of Alistair Maclean's novels the characters are weak and stereotypical. Although *Night Without End* at least has a semblance of a variegated, ensemble cast.

The novel works best while it remains a whodunit. Once the perpetrators are exposed (which only seems to come after the protagonist has accused practically everyone else) and the MacGuffin responsible for their desperate scheme is identified, the final chase sequence becomes rather predictable.

Not bad if you like straightforward action-mystery-thrillers, but to my mind not as good as the authors better known military/spy thrillers.

Teri-K says

A passenger crashes in the Arctic night and only three researchers are near enough to help. Short of food and supplies, with critically wounded people on their hands, they begin a desperate escape to help - knowing all the time that at least one of them is a cold-blooded murderer. MacLean is excellent at writing adventure stories with interesting settings, and this one works very well. I especially liked that our hero wasn't infallible but you still had to admire him. The details of the cold, ice, weather and survival techniques felt quite real to me and added up to an excellent read that kept me breathless till the final paragraphs.

Abhimanyu Karandikar says

Good thriller.... Very good story... Hard to keep away at night.... I only have a problem with the printing company... The print is very fine... Difficult for the naked eye to read...

Alton Motobu says

MacLean uses interesting techniques to make the reader really experience the story: the sub-zero temperatures, the interminable journey to reach rescue, and the unbearable suffering of the characters. There are graphic descriptions of fingers, ears, and other body parts being frozen off, and this happens to several characters. One characters literally freezes to death; one minute he is alive, the next minute he is frozen solid.

But the most effective technique is the use of super-long sentences to give the feeling of events going on and on and on and on without end. There were many sentences with over 100 words, and I counted two sentences that had over 160 words. Author uses semi-colons, multiple conjunctions, and lots of adjectives to describe what is going on. This forces the reader to slow down to insure things make sense. The plot itself is better than average MacLean, but be aware of all the literary techniques he uses. This is more of a literary experience than a story.

Hanne says

Exciting until the very last. It doesn't matter that it's old. (Except for the fact that there's no epilogue. I would have liked to know how they all managed afterwards.) The odds were impossible and probably unlikely. Still, the relentless cold he describes put the shivers in my bones without a doubt.

Ben Fairchild says

This is one of books that were thrown out of our local library and brought home by my old landlord. I was too embarrassed to admit to it until now my conscience bids me confess to I accidentally falling down the slippery slope of the nasty hooky plot that these trashy novels so mercilessly ensnare the reader with in the first few pages and continue to drag the hapless victim through hours and hours of miserable, sordid reading until the last page is finally attained like a prison release.

Alistair Maclean was the suburban middle class male commuter's Agatha Christie of the 1970s; when I was growing up his latest books were trumpeted on T.V. ads.

His 'Where Eagles Dare' was the subject of a film featuring a young Clint Eastwood and a not so young Richard Burton and also a rocking Iron Maiden song.

Egotistical, narrow minded, mean, vindictive, self-righteous and petty in the extreme is the hero of the novel who acts out the aforementioned commuter's fantasy. The hero often berates himself in the strongest terms allowable for not manifesting the level of analytical power necessary to have foreseen various obscure eventualities that could have foiled the plans of the miscreant who is finally psychologically tortured and left to die by the goodly hero.

What a thoroughly unpleasant experience. It's only saving grace was to give me joy in the knowledge that I am nothing like, and have nothing to do with, the vast readership that this author enjoyed.

Noshin Syara says

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Aisheth says

I first read this book over thirty years ago, but I remember it well.

I was eleven or twelve, and this was the first ever non children's book I read. I can remember being totally blown away. The suspense ! The drama ! An actual plot ! What had I been missing all these eleven or twelve years !

I was totally captivated and this book launched me into the world of fiction.

If I reread this soon, I may demote it from 'amazing' to 'really liked it'. But I think the warm feeling of nostalgia it gives me warrants the amazing tag. It did, after all, amaze me. I did reread it ten or so years ago, and once again before that, and it has aged well. I still enjoyed it, and the descriptions of arctic cold really had an effect. It's one of those books that will always be available on the shelf. Just seeing the spine is enough to bring a smile.

Wade Grassman says

When I was a lad, I very much liked Alistair MacLean novels. I was delighted to learn that they are now available on Nook. It is great to read some of his lesser known works, as opposed to “Where Eagles Dare”, “Ice Station Zebra” and “The Guns of Navarone”. My first re-introduction was “Night Without End”.

The story concerns the crashing of a commercial airliner in the middle of the Greenland tundra and the attempts of the personnel of a meteorological weather station to save them. As with most MacLean novels very little is as it seems. The crash is far from accidental and some of the passengers seem to have secrets. Again, as with most MacLean novels, not all of the secrets deal with the plot, but it makes finding the truth that much murkier. It seems only the people without secrets are the three men at the weather station.

Unlike most MacLane novels the hero is not some super English, or American, spy; nor is he some highly trained special operations type warrior. He is just an MD working as a scientist at the top of the world. He is able to use his knowledge of the environment as a weapon against the spies in his group.

The novel is both engaging and entertaining. As the story takes place in brutal nearly unimaginable cold, it may not be altogether a bad beach book.

Rumaisa Shaikh says

I read this book when I was very young. And I think this was my first ever mature thriller. It was during the time when I was still caught up shifting from Goosebumps from R.L.Stine (written for 11-12 year olds) to Fear-street series from R.L.Stine (for 14-15 year olds-this is acc to my times, right now kids are much smarter and probably would read heavier books than I did at a younger age than mine)

Anyway, during this time I remember going through my school library, desperate for trying out something "different". Funny as it sounds my "different" was still the same genre (thriller) but I did explore a different

writer.

I still remember This book was kept on a higher shelf and it was covered with a black binding and the real cover of the book wasn't there. The front was just plain black. I read the book description and it really excited me. I have always been keen about air planes and plane crashes. So i took it home and I remember it was a heavy read for me back then but i tried my best to understand each and every word and clung on to it with my heart beating really fast until the end.

These last two years, i don't know how i got reminded of this book and just , just how much I had enjoyed reading it. Sadly i couldn't remember its name. I didn't even remember any character names. However I could very faintly recall the storyline. So i went looking for it like crazy. Searching on google about one bit of the spoiler i had vaguely remembered. I knew it was a lost cause. There was no way I could find a book I remembered nothing of except the fact that it had made me so thrilled. Just these 2 weeks back, i realized all i had been searching for were books based on a plane crash and NOT books based on a plane crash IN THE Arctic! And so off i went again. I found four books and i read their descriptions (i had already decided by then that if I did not recognize my book by reading the descriptions, then I would read all of them) However I underestimated my memory and to my utter surprise, I straight away spotted my book from the description(it was the last one that I checked and i was quite hopeless)

I just downloaded its pdf to read it again and this is weird because I still find it as interesting. Have i not grown in all these years? Lmao i dont know!

Harihara says

A master class thriller!

Sanka Steens says

The story is about 3 scientists who are doing an investigation on the polar ice-caps. But one night, when they are about to go to bed, they hear an airplane very close to the ground, which is unusual at the polar ice-caps. The plane then crashes and the scientist get to the rescue. They then find only 9 people on the plane. After some days they find out it wasn't an accident and the pilot was killed. At first they suspect the stewardess but then they find out there are multiple killers. The killers turn out to be Carazinne and Smallwood. On their way to the sea Smallwood kills Levin and Johny kills Carazinne, Margriet and Smallwood then fall in a cave, which is shrinking, then Peter jumps on Smallwood, Peter and Margriet get out by using a rope, they then throw the whole rope to Smallwood so he's stuck in the cave. After all that they get picked up by the Navy and they are all safe.

I liked reading the book because it was written from the perspective of the main character which I like a lot because then I really get to understand that one character. I didn't really like the way of writing though because most of the really serious things didn't feel that important, what I mean is that I didn't get a harsh feeling at parts where I should. Like when people die, the writer should be able to give you a feeling of sadness or anger but I didn't really get that while reading this book. The difficulty was just what I expected, not too easy but also not too difficult.

Overall, I would recommend this book, because it is just a very nice story and doesn't take long to read at all. It's just like watching a short film in your head.

Mariana says

night without end

Alistair Maclean

genre: thriller

summary: an airplane crashes on the greenland ice camp, some scientists go and check the airplane and if there were survivors, but they find horrible things, one passenger and the majority of the flight crew was dead and the pilot was shot in the back, they find that the radio set and the accident manner were destroyed, at the night they knew that there was not enough food so they moved to the nearest settlement but during the transition the pilot that was in coma was suffocated and a mason, the leader of the scientific team disappeared in the middle of the arctic, and the dead passenger was a military courier, so they get into the conclusion that there was a murderer, mason left a message by guard, he found that the message carried something very important, so all that they try to do the murder was one step in front of them so it was impossible to find something.

theme: mystery and suspense

recommendation: I recommend this book to everybody who likes books of mystery, suspense and kind of scary

opinion: it was a good book, of easy understanding, and it takes me in, it caught me, its mystery, the desire to know what was going to happen next take me to read constantly and can't stop, I like it too much

vocabulary words

1. commission : a special group delegated to consider some matter

part of speech: we go and talk with the commission

sentence: The developers are now seeking approval from the landmarks commission.

2. convince: make realize the truth or validity of something

part of speech: mason try to convince me

sentence: But though he listened he was not convinced

3. frontier: a wilderness at the edge of a settled area of a country

part of speech: the airplane pass the frontier I think they were searching something

sentence: adding to the precarious security situation, tribesmen kidnapped 18 Egyptian border guards along the frontier with Israel in Sinai Peninsula

4. grove: a small growth of trees without underbrush

part of speech: here in the arctic we don't see any grove

sentence: Soon after we came to Pasadena, father bought an orange grove of twenty-five acres.

5. fray: a noisy fight

part of speech: I just hear a fray behind me

sentence: Armed rebels have joined the fray in recent months.

Mariana Toro

10a

Neil Fulwood says

MacLean's fifth novel earned him some of his best reviews, critics praising the evocative descriptive writing

(the setting is the arctic) and the focused, intense narrative. It's the first of a short run of novels written in the first person, a style which suited MacLean but which he abandoned entirely after 'Bear Island'. The narrator in 'Night Without End' is a doctor at an isolated research station - one of the rare MacLean protagonists not to be an almost indestructible macho hero - who is one of the first on the scene when a jet liner inexplicably crashes nearby. Survivors are rescued and a decision made by the research staff to set off across the arctic wastes to get them to safety before their meagre food supplies are exhausted. But with a high-tech MacGuffin on the plane and a couple of merciless killers among the survivors, the journey turns into a battle for survival against both the elements and enemy agents. Granted, the Cold War thriller elements in respect of the MacGuffin are hackneyed as fuck, but MacLean has the good sense to focus instead on the gruelling journey. The result is one of his less famous works - possibly because it never got the movie treatment - but arguably his most riveting.

Ruth Ann says

Riveting story of survival in at least 40 degree below zero temperatures in Greenland at the polar ice cap. A plane crashes at a scientific research station, which does not have enough space or food for the survivors.

And that's not the worst of it. A murderer is among the survivors. The pilots didn't die in the plane crash, they were shot. Now someone has destroyed the station's communication radio. A survivor with a head wound is smothered in his sleep....

Dr. Mason has to lead this group to Uplavnik, a scientific reporting station, about 200 miles away.

Donna says

This scattered story about a downed airliner never quite came together for me. I enjoyed the descriptions of arctic life and travel, but it was hard to connect with or care about the characters. The narrator made a lot of bad decisions, and while that's understandable from a scientist thrown into unexpected intrigue, he didn't have to be such a smug jerk about it. That combo of self-assured cockiness and getting nearly everything wrong made him thoroughly unlikable, and so did his sudden, inappropriate romantic attachment.

Bon Tom says

This is my first MacLean and I can only say no wonder this man's such a legend and no wonder at least three of his works (to my knowledge) turned into legendary movies. If this book is anything of a typical representative of his opus, then his works are movies in your head. This particular book is thriller equivalent of those so called hard boiled detective novels, except for the fact nothing is boiling here. The crew is freezing their asses off from the first till the last page, to the extent I felt victim of autosuggestion and shivered at moments without reason. So it goes without saying the book is very atmospheric. There's no filler moment in it, it doesn't drag for a second. It's good fun and suspense from start to finish. I'll go so far as to coin the category: Quality Guilty pleasure (Quilty??). This one is good sample of it for sure.

Bill says

One of Alistair MacLean's earliest thrillers, it's a well-paced, page-turner. Perfect setting, the frigid Greenland ice sheet, a group of scientists rush to save the passengers of a plane which has crashed on the plateau. What they find is even more surprising as some of the passengers are more than they seem. Struggling to survive in sub-zero temperatures and survive a murderer in their midst, it's definitely an action packed story. Excellent stuff.

Glen says

the best Maclean book, notwithstanding HMS ULYSSES (see my review). This ratchets the tension up unbearably, the characters are "real" and you care what happens to them. You can feel that you really are as cold as they are in the book. One of the best books I have ever read, and that has a lot of competition, as I can read about 100-120 pages an hour, and love reading, obsessively (literally, as I have pure OCD), and I have read 1000's of books

Gary Peterson says

As Sluggish as a Pre-War Citroen Tractor at 40 Below

Night Without End had a lot of promise with a compelling scenario, exotic setting, and an appealing narrator. The first quarter or so of the book is page-turning and exciting. But once they set out on the tractor for the coast the book sputters and lurches along to an unsatisfying finish.

Another Fawcett author of the era, Edward S. Aarons of the *Assignment* saga, kept his adventure stories at a taut 150-170 pages. Maclean's novel swelled to 224 pages of small type and would have greatly benefitted from trimming 40 or so pages of blubber. And there was a lot of that, so much so that I admit to skimming a few paragraphs describing yet again the tractor's inching across the icecap, how the winds blew, or the bleak and merciless terrain. The book was padded and stretched, Maclean goosing the flailing story with a senseless killing or someone slipping down a crevasse.

To his credit, Maclean researched this story thoroughly, but to this reader's dismay, he shoehorned all that research directly into the narrative with long expository paragraphs that did not enhance the reader's enjoyment or propel the plot forward. It did provide an unintentionally funny moment, however, when Captain Hillcrest--the very model of a modern major general--radios Mason:

"I guess you're a good way from the tractor. At 70 below you won't want to stay there too long. Suggest I do all the talking. I'll keep it brief." Hillcrest then launches into a half-page litany of every aircraft and ship that has joined the search, providing Mason the make, model, and national origin of each one, burying Mason under an avalanche of detail (133-34). So much for keeping it brief. Maclean didn't write that detailed list of military air and seacraft for Mason's benefit, but to impress the reader. I just felt bad Mason had to sit outside in 70-below temps while Maclean was utterly failing to impress me.

I couldn't ever accept, even for the plot's sake, that no aircraft were searching for the airplane crash survivors. Hillcrest mentioned a couple tried and failed, but with the precious missile mechanism at stake I would have thought the search would be relentless. I know from the John Wayne movie *Island in the Sky* that

finding a few survivors in vast snow-covered wilderness is no mean feat, but in this case knowing the base camp and probable path and destination of the tractor would have narrowed the scope and made discovery likely.

Now, this will sound heartless, but I didn't give a damn about Mahler or Marie LeGarde, the two albatrosses the ragtag tractor crew haul across ice-capped hill and dale. Mahler's hovering between life and death for over a hundred pages was just boring. I felt no connection to the character. The stereotypical life story he spun, straight out of a Singer short story, was even dismissed as a lie by Mason. LeGarde gave no indication of being the star of musical stage. I expected a bombastic character, one who would be played by Shelley Winters if they ever made a movie of the book.

Besides trusty Eskimo sidekick Jackstraw (who I envisioned as Clint Walker circa *Kodiak*), there were no standout, sharply defined characters. None of the survivors, even Margaret Ross, whom Maclean dotes on and casts as the damsel in distress near the end, were ever more than two-dimensional. The big reveal of the bad guys was anticlimactic, though I admit to enjoying the fitting finish of the most evil one of them, as if creation itself conspired to snuff out such a foul pollutant.

Night Without End became the *Book Without End*, one that would have been much improved by a trimming the fat and bringing it down to a lean 150 pages.
