



White Heat

M.J. McGrath

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Longlisted for the CWA Gold Dagger Award, *White Heat* is the first book in the gripping Edie Kiglatuk Mystery Series, with "an Arctic setting so real it'll give you frostbite" (Dana Stabenow, author of *A Cold Day for Murder*)

Half Inuit and half outsider, Edie Kiglatuk is the best guide in her corner of the Arctic. But as a woman, she gets only grudging respect from her community's Council of Elders. While Edie is leading two tourists on a hunting expedition, one of them is shot and killed. The Council wants to call it an accident, but Edie and police sergeant Derek Palliser suspect otherwise. When the other tourist disappears, Edie sets off into the far reaches of the tundra for answers.

A stunning debut novel, *White Heat* launches a formidable new series set amidst an unforgiving landscape of ice and rock, of spirit ancestors, and never-rotting bones.

White Heat Details

Date : Published (first published 2011)

ISBN :

Author : M.J. McGrath

Format : Kindle Edition 397 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Cultural, Canada, Crime, Thriller, Audiobook

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From Reader Review White Heat for online ebook

Kari says

White Heat is beautifully written. The author did a wonderful job of describing the area in which the story took place. As I was reading, I really felt like I had been dropped in the Arctic region. Her descriptions of the landscape make me want to visit there myself someday. I also really liked her characters. Edie was so believable and not without fault. I want to know more about her and I hope that the author visits her again. I also enjoyed the friendship that develops between Edie and Derek. It was appropriately not romantic and therefore more believable.

While I enjoyed this one, I thought it was a bit long. There was definitely some content that could have been cut out as I felt it was not necessary to the advancement of the story. I listened to the audio version and I enjoyed the Kate Reading's (the narrator) voice. Her accent in pronouncing the Inuit names and dialect gave the story a genuine feel.

Jessica says

I won this book as a First Reads giveaway.

The imagery in this book is phenomenal. The author brings you to a world that most people never see in there lives, well except on television.

The main character Edie is an Inuit and she is investigating some deaths that occur in the Arctic near her home. No, she is not a detective she is a teacher and a hunter. While most people want to forget what happened and call it an accident she needs to know the truth.

Throughout her investigation Edie becomes closer to one of two detectives in the area.

Derek Palliser tries to stay out of everybody's business. At heart he is a scientist not a policeman. He is obsessed with Lemmings and their "habits." He would rather be studying the rodents than trying to solve most crimes, especially the small town ones.

Throughout the story the author touches upon some touchy subjects of our time. For example, she talks about the ice melting and how the animals are changing their habits. All of this can be attributed to global warming.

Don't worry this book is not just about global warming and politics, it is a good mystery/crime novel that takes place in a magical setting.

Miles says

Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin, Laurel & Hardy and Buster Keaton – not the first thing that comes to mind when reviewing a book set in the desolate regions of the Arctic but believe you me, these famous Hollywood

stars of the classic silent era all have one thing in common – they perform almost on a daily basis in Autisq in the Arctic – more often than not comforting “White Heat’s” protagonist Edie Kiglatuk in her front room.

A well established and published non-fictional author (Long Exile, Hopping), Melanie McGrath is a relative newcomer when it comes to fictional titles – indeed “White Heat” is her first foray into the world of make-believe. Although a terrific and powerful work of fiction, McGrath blends her immeasurable knowledge of the Arctic and Inuit to deliver a novel that encompasses many of the realities and problems faced by the Inuit community - crime, the harsh environment, education (or lack thereof) and political corruption.

In 1953 the Canadian Government relocated three dozen Inuit from their established homes in Hudson Bay - North East of Canada – to Ellesmere Island – a barren and underdeveloped strip of land – with the promise they could return home. McGrath writing under the name MJ McGrath briefly touches on this piece of history in “White Heat” as Edie travels the region in a quest for truth and justice.

“Nothing on the tundra rotted . . . The whole history of human settlement lay exposed there, under that big northern sky. There was nowhere here for bones to hide.

On Craig Island, a vast landscape of ice north of the Arctic Circle, three travellers are hunting duck. Among them is expert Inuit hunter and guide, Edie Kiglatuk; a woman born of this harsh, beautiful terrain. The two men are tourists, experiencing Arctic life in the raw, but when one of the men is shot dead in mysterious circumstances, the local Council of Elders in the tiny settlement of Autisq is keen to dismiss it as an accident.

Then two adventurers arrive in Autisq hoping to search for the remains of the legendary Victorian explorer Sir James Fairfax. The men hire Edie – whose ancestor Welatok guided Fairfax – along with Edie’s stepson Joe, and two parties set off in different directions. Four days later, Joe returns to Autisq frostbitten, hypothermic and disoriented, to report his man missing. And when things take an even darker turn, Edie finds herself heartbroken, and facing the greatest challenge of her life . . .”

Full Review on my blog <http://www.milorambles.com/2011/03/14...>

Bettie? says

Bettie's Books

Raven says

Set in the icy wastes of a small Inuit community in the High Arctic on Ellesmere Island and the fictional Craig Island this is a tale of the harsh realities of survival and murder. The story centres on a community facing the common woes of an indigenous people subjected to their dependence on a larger sovereign state, in this case, Canada, and highlights the social problems of drink and drug dependency that these and similar indigenous communities across the globe suffer. This, for me, was probably the most interesting aspect of the book as McGrath documents the day-to-day lives of these inhabitants referring often to the minutiae of their daily routines, language and life within this unrelenting environment, drawing on her established reputation as a non-fiction writer. The depiction of the landscape and the sheer grind of existence living with these

climatic conditions was captured perfectly throughout and it did amuse me somewhat that a character refers to one day with a temperature of -25 as 'balmy'! So these aspects of the book should have created a perfect backdrop for a gripping tale of murder in the Arctic wastes...

However, the main plot line was a disjointed and slightly unbalanced affair focusing on the character of Edie Kiglatuk, a part-time teacher and guide, and opening with the murder of a tourist she is accompanying on a visit to the island. As the town council are keen to sweep this incident under the carpet and the body count continues to grow, including one of Edie's nearest and dearest, Edie finds herself drawn into a dangerous conspiracy concerning the tapping of natural resources in the Arctic region by an unscrupulous business organisation. This leads Edie to a seemingly suicidal mission to mainland Greenland to uncover and expose this conspiracy putting herself and those within her community at great danger. To be honest I found the plot a bit turgid with the central conspiracy not really gripping me in the way that I think it should, and I felt that at times some fiercer editing was needed with some passages meandering on losing this reader's interest. In terms of characterisation, aside from Edie who was a well-drawn and empathetic character, the other protagonists were less effective particularly the male characters, and I think that maybe McGrath focused too much on the factual construct of the book leaving gaps elsewhere, which would hinder the engagement of the reader with the overall story line. I think this is something that McGrath overcomes in the follow up book 'The Boy In The Snow', but for me, despite the strength of the historical, political and cultural aspects of 'White Heat', I was a little disappointed with this debut.

Cheryl says

Mystery set in the Canadian arctic. First in a series, so the plot lagged a bit from a lot of character backstory. I liked the descriptions of the arctic and the interactions of the characters in the Inuit town. The mystery didn't really take off until almost halfway through the book. Hopefully, the next book's plot will be paced a little better.

Sandy says

I seriously tried to read this book but I struggled through it and finally gave up on page 187. I know I was halfway through it but the book could not keep my attention. I am not a reader who gives up on a book very often, I never start a book I don't think I can't finish, so I was kinda upset with myself for not finishing it but it was too slow for me. For the first 100 pages, I don't really remember much. Just recently in the book, the action just started picking up and the victims started piling up and Edie is starting to investigate them so I am starting to get excited about reading the book but really folks, I am on page 187 and I have a total of 381 pages and I don't think I can do it.

Who do I think would like this book? If you are interested in the Arctic landscape, the author does a brilliant job describing it for the reader. If you are interested in learning something about the Inuit culture, this book talks about their language including some of their words with the English version, their way of thinking, some history, and their way of living. Is this book for me? no, sorry I have to move on. But it could be a book you enjoy.

Linda Baker says

I was looking around hoopla for something to download and listen to while working on an extended project; a project requiring little or no actual thought. White Heat popped up and since it was narrated by one of my favorite narrators, Kate Reading, I thought I would give it a try. Little did I know that White Heat would be one of those books that remind me just why I love to read. Books offer me the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture of a place that I will never visit. White Heat is set in the Canadian High Arctic region among the Inuit People. Edie Kiglatuk is a half-Inuit, half-Caucasian part time teacher and hunting guide. She is divorced, a recovering alcoholic and an accomplished hunter who is not not quite accepted in the community. Not accepted, even though she has lived there all her life. White Heat opens with Edie leading a hunting trip for two men from the US, men that she doesn't much like. The trip goes as bad as it can get when one of the men is shot and a blizzard sets in. Shortly afterward Edie loses someone to suicide who is very dear to her; she is convinced that the two events are related but community leaders are anxious to shove it all under the rug.

I have to admit to almost total ignorance of the Inuit culture and the people who live in such a cold, dark, alien and deadly place. McGrath has the power to paint a vivid picture through her words of both landscape and people. Like most indigenous people in places where the white man rules, the Inuit have more than their fair share of poverty, drug and alcohol abuse and despair; all of which play a part in the story of Edie's quest for the truth. Edie is a pint-sized, resourceful dynamo who is as stubborn as they come. She does get some help from her friend, policeman Derek Palliser, but precious little from anyone else, especially her no-good ex-husband.

There are so many things that I enjoyed about White Heat; the descriptions of place and culture, the full-bodied secondary characters and of course Edie herself. I did feel that the mystery at the heart of Edie's quest for the truth was overly convoluted. McGrath gets bogged down at times with minute accounts of Edie's every action and thought. Edie is extremely competent but reckless and seems to get out of tight spots with sheer luck on several occasions. Those are the only quibbles I have but keep me from giving a full 5 Star rating. I would recommend White Heat to mystery fans, especially those looking for something a little different.

RATING- 4 Stars

Rob Kitchin says

As debut crime novels goes, White Heat couldn't be much better. It has everything a good crime novel should have: strong plot, excellent characterization, vivid sense of place, a dollop full of history, culture and social politics, and a swirl of conspiracy. The book doesn't simply describe the world of Edie Kiglatuk - the small, tight knit community and the icy, harsh landscape - but places the reader into it. Edie is a wonderful creation - a headstrong woman who rails against custom and tradition at the same time as she tries to maintain them in the face of encroachment by the 'white world'. The other characters, with their various traits and foibles, are also well penned. The plot is engaging and unfolds at a nice pace and manages to remain coherent to the end without falling apart or being overly reliant on coincidence. Where the book really shone was in the portrayal of the Inuit life and the rendering of the icy, harsh but beautiful landscape. Not only was I thoroughly entertained but I learned a fair bit about the realities and social politics of Arctic living. I've already recommended the book to friends and I'm hoping that there are more Edie stories in the pipeline.

Vaso says

Το συγκεκριμένο βιβλίο είναι τοποθετημένο στον Καναδικό Αρκτικό Κόσμο. Βλέπουμε τον τρόπο ζωής, επιβίωσης και διατροφής των ντόπιων κατοίκων, οι οποίοι σε κάποιες περιπτώσεις παρακαμπτούν ? αγνοούν τον νόμο για το "κοινό καλό της φυλής τους", με μια δόση μυστηρίου, για να υπαίχει και το σχετικό ενδιαφέρον.

Αυτός που για την ?ντι ξεκινά σαν αναζήτησης για τα ατα θάνατου του Τζ, καταλήγει σε πολιτική παιχνιδι με διαφορετικούς εμπλεκόμενους.

Καλή η πρώτη προσπάθεια της συγγραφέως στο μυθιστόρημα, απλά αισθ?νθηκα ότι σε ορισμένα σημεία φλύαρο?με χωρίς λόγο, με αποτέλεσμα να απομακρ?νεται από το στόχο της.

3,5 αστέρια

Skip says

Having read all of Dana Stabenow's Kate Shugak mysteries set in Alaska, MJ McGrath's Edie Kiglatuk series seemed quite similar although the latter is based on arctic Quebec, across the sea from Greenland. Edie has some of the same issues of alcoholism and a dysfunctional love life, but is more of a hunter/guide and less of a detective. Her police contact Derek Pallister was pretty weak, and had to be constantly prodded to action by Edie. Two men, masquerading as tourists, die under mysterious circumstances and then Edie's stepson appears to commit suicide as a consequence. The local characters are quite colorful, especially Aunt Martie and old man Koperkuj, and the book delved into some of the serious problems faced by the Inuit. The underlying rationale for the deaths, when finally clarified, seemed far fetched. Unlike Stabenow's focus on tasty foods, like fry bread, the meals in White Heat were gross.

Stephanie says

"White Heat" is the first in a mystery series set on Ellesmere Island which is next to Greenland though it's actually part of Canada. The protagonist is Edie Kiglatuk, an Inuit woman who makes her living as a hunting and fishing guide. Edie becomes caught up in a mystery when one of the two men she is out guiding for is shot by someone out in the middle of nowhere. She tries to get him back to the village for medical help but he ends up dying along the way. His assistant goes along with the local mayor in deciding that the dead man must have been killed in a ricochet from his own rifle but Edie knows this is a load of bull but has no idea why they are trying to cover it up. Things go from bad to worse when someone Edie loves is found dead and the reason for his death is reported as suicide, though Edie KNOWS this is also not true. So bodies are stacking up, people are going missing and Edie is on the hunt, trying to figure it all out.

Edie is aided by the Ellesmere Island police sergeant, Derek Palliser, who is caught in with his own issues. Someone is leaving their dogs running wild and his lemming research is being ruined. He is also nursing a broken heart when his girlfriend Mischa leaves him at the end of summer. He is not all that willing to help Edie at first but with more bodies piling up and more evidence of foul play in the so-called suicide, Derek has no choice but to do what he can to help Edie.

The mystery in this one was so-so but the setting and the characters were so interesting! I found myself sharing little tidbits of Inuit lore with my family that I learned in this book. I will be looking for the next in the series because I really enjoyed getting to know Edie and about life above the 60th parallel. I'm from southern USA where we rarely ever get snow or ice so I found the descriptions just fascinating. Recommended for those that like a light mystery and are interested in learning about the Inuit culture.

Matt says

In her fiction debut, M.J. McGrath blows this one out of the water (or shall I say, ice?) with an excellent novel set in Canada's far North. Using the Canadian Arctic as its setting and utilising the nuanced characters found therein, McGrath creates a stellar novel that has the reader feel as though they are there, living with the Inuit and not sitting on the sidelines like a useless 'qalunaat' (white man). Using authentic language, skills, foods, and techniques, McGrath brings to life a story that has you guessing to the last page.

Being Canadian, the stigma of generalising the Inuit is common. They live in the snow, eat seals, and hunt all year-round. However, McGrath (a Brit, no less) gives them life and tells the story of their struggle in the far North, as well as illustrating their intricate way of daily life. She adds a murder mystery to the story, which makes the book even better and has you guessing from the get-go until you put it down at the end. Politics (both within the town and between the Inuit and 'the southerners') also plays a key role and opens the eyes of the reader, wherever they may find themselves living. These are not stupid people, but they are highly misrepresented. They have their maladies, as do we all, but their ingenuity and adapted way of life left me wanting to know more (I was pleased to see another book comes out soon). McGrath keeps the mystery on the front burner while educating the reader throughout.

I was so pleased to see fresh take on this group of misunderstood Canadians and how they see themselves fitting into the larger Canadian and world picture.

Kudos Ms. McGrath! I am so eager to read your next novel and learn even more. I would HIGHLY recommend this to someone who likes a new take on the murder mystery genre. Well worth your time!

Annmarie says

A compelling, gritty debut mystery set in the frozen tundra of the arctic, on Canada's far northern Ellesmere Island, close to Greenland. I found the descriptions of the rapidly changing, harsh, beautiful location and of the way of life of the rugged, troubled residents to be fascinating; the murder mystery was pretty good. 3.5 stars overall. I've read that the British author, who has previously written nonfiction, is at work on a second mystery featuring the appealing main character, Edie. I anticipate it will be even better.

Half-Inuit Arctic guide and hunter Edie Kiglatuk is leading a routine hunting trek with two qalunaat, or whites, when one is shot while she is off making tea for the group. Edie's beloved stepson Joe, in training to be a nurse, comes by snowmobile to help since a blizzard grounds the available planes, but the man dies anyway. Despite their doubts, Edie and Joe acquiesce to the Tribal Council's decision that the death was self-inflicted, a hunting accident. The Council doesn't want one of the only profitable sources of income on the Island, the guiding, to be impacted by suspicious death investigations.

Edie decides not to rock the boat, since gaining the patriarchal Council's approval to be a guide was difficult

enough despite her enormous skill as a hunter and guide, and she needs the part time guiding jobs to pay for Joe's schooling. But Joe is more doubtful, and when another guiding trip goes wrong, more deaths prompts the fierce and independent Edie to start investigating with the reluctant help of Inuit police sergeant Derek Palliser, who would much rather be researching lemmings. The numerous threads of the plot feature culture clashes between Inuit and whites, past injustices, energy corporations' interests in exploring the Arctic, drug use and the high suicide rate on the Island, Greenland, NASA's presence on the island, and more. Edie and Derek are very believable and sympathetic characters, despite their various personal failings, and their love of their arctic landscape is contagious.

I won an advance readers copy through First Reads. The book was a great accompaniment to my vacation trip to Canada (but not northern Canada!).

Carol says

I got a hair behind on my reviews and have been trying to find some time to say a bit about White Heat. This book must have been under my radar before I heard about it on The Readers but it's definitely Simon, who made me run to the shelves to scoop this up to read. His enthusiasm sparked my interest and I can say I was not disappointed.

What captured me most about White Heat was its Arctic setting and Inuit culture and heritage. You can not read this without being just a tad curious about what the Inuit are all about. For lover's of Swedish mysteries, you won't find a colder place than Autisaq. Edie Kiglatuk, half Inuit, half white, hunter guide, is one kick-ass character and I loved her no nonsense attitude, spirit, survivor instincts, and just a bit of femininity that shone through. Yep, it's a mystery, so there's a murder, a whole bunch of characters with motive to cast suspicion and enough events to speculate the motive. It's action packed, humorous at times, and yet all is not happy for our Edie. She's got family issues in the closet and out, some solid characters in supporting roles including one great mutt, Bonehead, real good at warning when there's bear about. There's a theme of silent film, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin weaved throughout that will make you go hunting these old classics.

I learned quite a bit; found myself looking up words, to familiarize myself with animals, food, etc, part of Kiglatuk's daily life. Lemmings, particularly were appealing. I also used my atlas to pinpoint the locale.

White Heat is a debut that begs for the next in the series. I'll be on the list. Thanks Simon.
