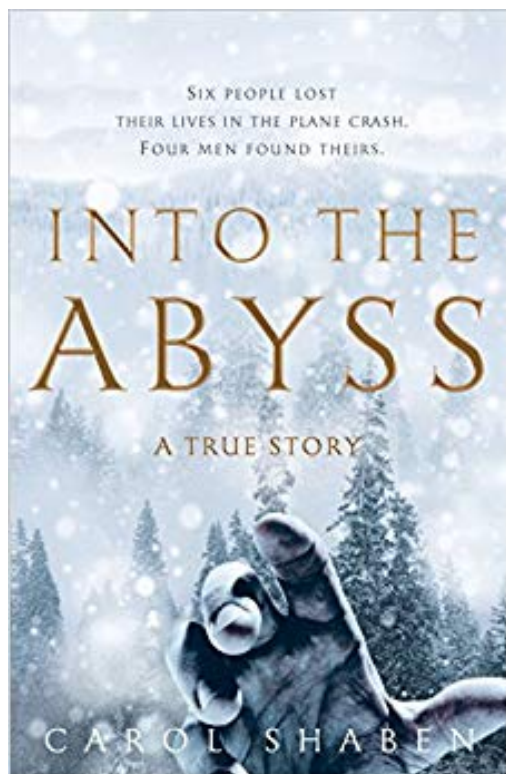


Into the Abyss *by* Carol Shaben



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Reviews of the *Into the Abyss* *by* Carol Shaben

Ferri - My name

In October 1984, a Piper Navajo Chieftain commuter flight, loaded to the gunwales with nine passengers and too much baggage plus one young and thoroughly in-over-his-head pilot, crashed onto a snowy mountain slope in northern Canada. Six of the passengers died, some slowly and in agony. Three, plus the pilot, survived and spent a bitter-cold night and part of the next day in their street clothes, without shelter, before being saved by a substantial search-and-rescue operation mounted by the RCAF, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and civilian pilots and snowmobilers. All four kept their wits about them despite having injuries ranging from banged up to severe.

It was an odd quartet. One was an important Canadian politician. Another was the pilot, who knew he had screwed up badly by trying to make a solo night instrument approach to an airport that was below minimums and had an ADF beacon as its sole navaid. And the other two were a Mountie and a tough young ex-con he'd been escorting to court. The prisoner was the strongest, bravest and most resourceful of them all. Without him, some might have died.

The author, Carol Shaben, had unusual access to the four. Her father was the pol, and she has used that happenstance to tell a survival story in a manner and with a style that the deservedly lauded Jon Krakauer would appreciate. As somebody who has both piloted Piper Navajo Chieftains and flown in the Canadian north country, I also find it remarkable that Shaben, a nonpilot, has gotten every aviation detail right. There are "aviation experts" writing and reporting for major media outlets who couldn't do half as well as Shaben does.

The book in fact is about long-term survival far beyond a cold night in the bush. There are the struggles of an overworked young pilot trying to build hours so he can get a real airline job, as well as the marginal existence of the tiny, family-run commuterline that hires him. The crash bonds the four survivors, who become friends thereafter--particularly the Mountie and his former prisoner. Each handles the crash experience in a different way, and their lives are thereafter shaped by it. Shaben follows them all through their emotional and physical struggles. She tells a fascinating story of lives that were changed forever by a dreadful night that the rest of us can barely imagine.

Gunos

I've enjoyed the book, but truly expected it to be more of a page turner. I opened it, expecting the fast pace of survival in the wilderness. I'm an avid outdoors (wo)man, and I'm fully aware the risk of the mountains at night. The details of emotions are scarce, and I know the emotion of being lost in a wilderness about to freeze to death. The book tells a nice story, and good insider details of the plane crash, but, alas, moves too slowly and spares plenty of detail in the telling of its story. What about the fear of the elements? The icy conditions? The probability of animals nearby?

At one point, Erik and Paul are working under the plane, and out of nowhere comes the accusation that Paul has been stealing from the luggage and the deceased. It has been shown earlier in the book, where he uses clothes of the deceased to clothe those clinging to life, but I fail to see its relation to the rest of the story. Why was this important? Of course it mattered, because otherwise the four clinging to life were likely to have frozen to death, but the accusation of petty theft?

Not what I expected. I like the side by side comparison as time marched on. I enjoyed some of the smaller details that may have otherwise been overlooked, but Ms. Shaben's father is the center of her focus. The others had to be thinking of their own lives. Again, detail in this section is sketchy. Oh, and the first section of the book is incredibly dull, and all about Erik's flight experience, not in reference to the remainder of the book, or so I felt.

It's alright. I'd recommend you get it from a library or a friend, though, if you so desire. There are better stories out there.

LONUDOG

This book touched me very deeply. Carol Shaben's experience as a reporter, coupled with her excellent skills as a storyteller, gave birth to an extraordinary book.

Not only did she relate the very real experiences of the survivors of a small plane crash in the wilds of Canada, she also gave me a detailed look into their lives both before and after the crash.

This book was very real for me because of her great involvement in the story, her desire to know the truth, and her deep care for the characters about whom she wrote.

I stayed involved with the book because it showed me not only the experiences of the main characters but also the lives of many of the minor characters on the night of the crash.

Because of the care and compassion with which the story was related, it evoked my care and compassion. I so wanted Paul to pull the rabbit out of the hat for himself, and I appreciated each person's struggles and triumphs because they were and are real people who were greatly affected by being in a plane crash.

Thank you so much, Carol, for sharing this with me.
God's Blessings to you.

Endieyab

This book describes the crash of a commuter flight in northern Canada - the events leading up to it, the struggle of the survivors to avoid freezing to death before rescue, the organization and activities of the rescuers, and finally how the crash affected the subsequent lives of the survivors.

One is kept in suspense about how the rescue will proceed, in spite of the bad weather and the injuries resulting from the crash.

The subsequent lives of some of the survivors were in some cases changed profoundly but in other cases reverted to their previous patterns. The author, herself the daughter of one of the survivors, did a great job of telling the story and showing how, although we usually hear that some people may have survived a terrible event, we usually hear nothing about how the event may have changed their lives.

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