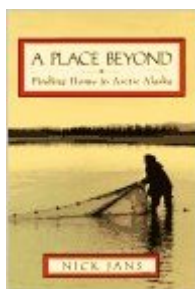


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# A Place Beyond: Finding Home In Arctic Alaska



## Synopsis

This powerful book blends the rhythms of daily arctic life with high adventure. "Jans's writing is a pleasure," said the "Fairbanks Daily News-Miner."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a must-read for anyone planning to spend time in Alaska. Jans captures the norms, customs and ways of the people in the Northwest Arctic region. This was one of my very first books when contemplating moving to Alaska. And I recently re-read the books and realized exactly how much I had missed the first time through. It has been almost two years since returning to the Arctic and I cannot believe the everyday life he captures! Read this for all it is worth and extract all you can from his words.

One hell of a good book. A book like this is something that is sorely needed as it tells the truth about the mess and stupidity that politicians are capable of. That, and the idiocy of past missionaries way of dealing with native beliefs. If you think about it.,the government back in the time the "west" was being explored used missionaries as a means of control and subjugation of many indian tribes, if not all of them.

A Place Beyond: Finding Home in Arctic Alaska is an exceedingly well-done collection of essays. Each essay stands alone, but when grouped together they blend into an entire mosaic of the author's life and experiences in the Arctic. The essays focus on a variety of topics, many that you

expect, such as hunting, fishing, and surviving the winter. Topics that are a pleasant surprise include examinations of motor boats, mosquitoes, basketball, and advanced mechanics. Nick Jans has a knack for writing that many acclaimed authors do not possess. It shines in each reflection he shares. An essay about a topic such as hunting will focus on hunting but will usually branch off into a few other streams of thought that run back into the focus before the end. It may sound complex in my description, but it really helps the reader who is unfamiliar with Alaska see the panorama of life there as opposed to the tunnel vision scenario most frequently depicted. This book was a true pleasure to read, and I am sure almost anyone would enjoy it.

Nick Jans is an extremely gifted writer. I first read one of his essays in the Reader's Digest, and I was so impressed, I just had to read the rest of the book. His straightforward clarity, use of metaphor and intriguing observations make the Alaskan wilderness come to life. I personally would never want to live in Alaska, but I thoroughly enjoyed experiencing a bit of Alaska by reading this book.

**Meaning Beyond Words** According to author Nick Jans, "Words, like map and compass, tell one story yet fail at another." If there is meaning beyond words - well - Nick Jans is a literary guide I urge you to read - as he details the stories of his life among the Inupiat people of Ambler, Alaska. Jans has a way of writing that affords the reader the privilege to envision, imagine, see, smell, hear, taste, feel --- to journey intimately to those places where - for far too many authors - their ability fails to open these dimensions for our souls to wander, to live, to explore. Jans writing creates a yearning in the reader to return to his work - to immerse oneself into the marvelous milieu that Jans is uniquely gifted to create. As Jans writes, "It's not the death of the elders I mourn. It's what's dying with them and what's taking their place." There is an intimacy to Jans writing that allows you to feel what he is writing about - how he actually feels about the subtleties of his many years of living in Ambler reveal. He possesses an uncanny ability to observe and relay for the reader the human dimension of feeling that many writers simply are unable to accomplish. This book is a song. It's music for the soul. Listen to Jans sing: "And beneath it all is music - a delicate, liquid shattering, a song of returning, of breathing again after long silence. I should join the others in their celebration, but just now, I want to sit alone, to watch and listen as the winter breaks apart." Nick Jans is an artist whose literary gifts allow the reader to enjoy dimensions of meaning and sensory stimulation amidst a literary topography that has been characterized as -- "meaning beyond words," a place beyond. Enjoy *A Place Beyond - Finding Home in Arctic Alaska* by Nick Jans. Trust me - you'll fall in

love with this book. I did.

This is the second book by Nick Jans I've read, and I enjoyed this enormously. The first book was "The Grizzly Maze" about Timothy Treadwell and his death in a brown bear attack-- a superb book, but very different in its mood and style. Each short essay/chapter in A Place Beyond was interesting and told so well that there was not a word out of place. Why would someone from the lower 48 move to the western Brooks Range, and come to consider that place and its inhabitants "home"? At the start of the book this is a mystery, and by the end the pleasures and friends Jans has in this place make it clear to the reader that this is the place Jans will happily return to again and again despite all the challenges of living in that Arctic environment. I have not read Jans' previous book about living in the Arctic (yet), and I gather that there is some duplication. At least as a first book on Ambler, Alaska, I found this to be one of the most enjoyable and informative books to read that I have come across in a long time. My only quibble is that each chapter begins with a lovely, evocative black and white photo, apparently taken by Jans. The photos are lovely, but they are printed so unnecessarily small, that they cannot be fully appreciated. Overall, well done!

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