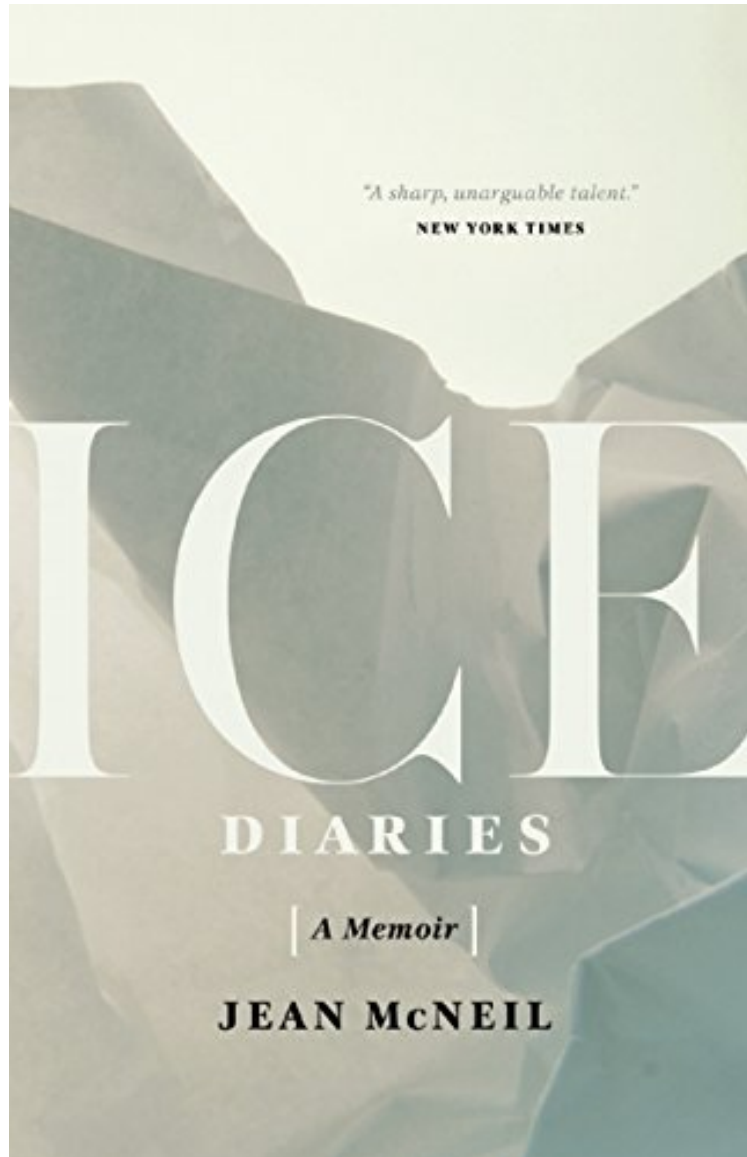


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Ice Diaries: An Antarctic Memoir

Jean McNeil

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Jean McNeil : Ice Diaries: An Antarctic Memoir before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ice Diaries: An Antarctic Memoir:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Ruth M. Paez it was extremely interesting 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. McNeil's journey By BPLI am an experienced Antarctic veteran. This is a memoir of an Antarctic experience by a newcomer. It is crammed full of rich prose. In the spirit of Wild, by Cheryl Strayed,

McNeil withholds no secrets. This kept me reading. Her descriptions of the landscape are unique and unexpected, like the Antarctic. Many times I read them and said "yeah, that's how it is," or, "I'd never thought of it that way." She devotes a good portion of book to revealing the characters she became close to. They are convincing in their own uniqueness. In a parallel story she shows the turmoil of her pubescent youth, and how she escaped it. Although compelling, I didn't quite get the reason for this structure. It does show her strong character though, and makes you root for her. In the end she is telling the reader how the Antarctic changed her. Anyone who has been there under similar circumstances knows they've been changed, but most are not sure how. Her book joins the ranks of others that recounted visits to Antarctica by observers not scientists and technical staff. I'm comparing this book to *Antarctica* by Gabrielle Walker, and *Terra Incognita* by Sara Wheeler. Wheeler's is the best, but McNeil ties with Walker. All these books reveal a place where nobody belongs and from where no one really leaves.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Evocative and memorable

By Arja Salafranca

The trick about Antarctica is knowing when to leave ...I've long been fascinated by the thought of visiting Antarctica, and in the absence of any possibility of visiting, at present, I have instead devoured books by those who have visited and lived on this vast icy continent. This book is easily one of the most memorable and evocative I have read both a travel story as well as a personal memoir. Moving from her past growing up in Canada, to time spent in Antarctica as year as writer-in-residence with the British Antarctic Survey, *Antarctic*, Jean McNeil. It is about coming to terms and processing that past, as well as some of the changes that can occur in you the longer you spend in Antarctica, and McNeil unflinchingly describes her depression as darkness sets in before an Antarctic winter. But time is also running out as global warming heats up the earth, and this book is both a warning of environmental damage, as well as homage to that strange continent. The language is achingly beautiful, a meditative book to be savoured and returned to. Some places do stay behind you. But others refuse to assume their rightful place on the linear timeline. These form islands in the river of time and in memory, persistent and opaque. There live people and events that happen over and over again, spiralling out beyond that which can be described as already experienced and so known; something about them is being worked on a timescale far grander than the moment, or our individual lives. They are the past, but the future also. The Antarctic is an addition, they say... The world will never look the same again, they say. By venturing into that vortex and the beguiling frozen underworld, even once, you risk becoming part of the strange fraternity of people obsessed with a void continent moored at the bottom of the world.

What do we stand to lose in a world without ice?

Ice Diaries is stunningly written and should be on the shelf of anyone fascinated by the globe's final geographic and psychic frontier. *New York Times* It's a discussion of the Antarctic as a physical landscape its impact on the imagination and an exploration of one person's inner world. *Chicago Tribune* McNeil's first-person narrative of her experience wholly absorbs. . . Most of *Ice Diaries*, however, reads like a novel. It's a paradox: the best novels emulate real life and the best true stories emulate fiction. *Maclean's* *Ice Diaries* artfully conveys both the magical allure and the deadly hauteur of this icy world that few of us will ever see. *Toronto Star* [McNeil's] new book is a welcome literary-minded addition to a category of books dominated by male explorers. *Metro* She writes about the loneliness, the fear, the utter darkness, and the rare and incredible beauty of places few of us will ever visit. Highly recommended. For the *Love of Books* The reason I picked this book up was because I love that combination of geography, history and science but from a writer's perspective. . . All in all this was a varied and enjoyable read. *Books Are a Uniquely Portable Magic* McNeil is a tremendous writer who brings the Antarctic landscape to life with the deftness of her prose, and her memoir is rich with fascinating details. *Pickle Me This* In *Ice Diaries*, McNeil brings the austere beauty and the constant danger of the continent to life. Weaving science and narrative, she draws vivid portraits of the people who are drawn to the unforgiving continent and the importance of the research conducted in the world's icy places. Her descriptions of the ships and bases, those thin membranes against the elements, are unforgettable. . . *Ice Diaries* is a rare glimpse at an elusive continent and a haunting story of the relationship between beauty and terror, loss and abandonment, transformation and triumph. *SirReadaLot.org*