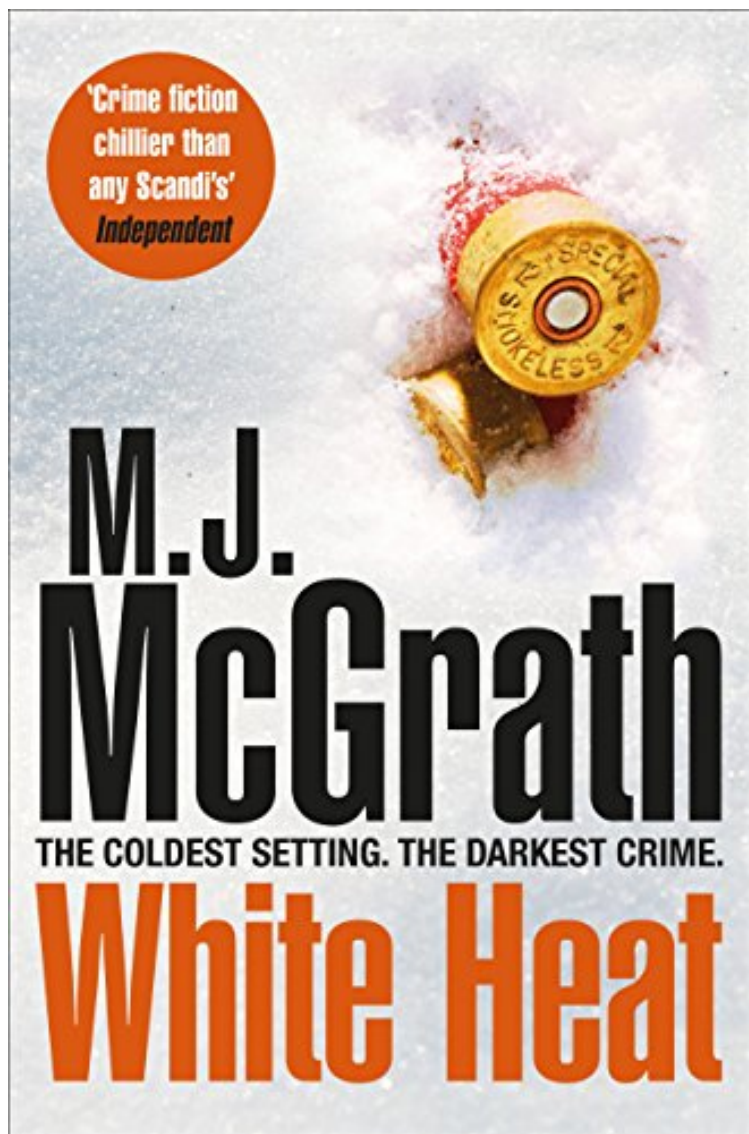


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# White Heat



*Par M. J. McGrath*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe first novel in the hugely compelling Edie Kiglatuk series set in the high Arctic..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 Autisaq is keen to dismiss it as an accident.Then two adventurers arrive in Autisaq 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 . . . 'A blazing star of a thriller: vivid, tightly-sprung, and satisfying on all levels. Encountering Edie Kiglatuk, the toughest, smartest Arctic heroine since Miss Smilla, left me with that rare feeling of privilege you get on meeting extraordinary people in real life. A huge achievement' Liz Jensen, author of *The Rapture* 'Edie is an ingenious and original creation but the most addictive character is the Arctic itself' *Sunday Telegraph* Extrait

As she set a chip of iceberg on the stove for tea, Edie Kiglatuk mulled over why it was that the hunting expedition she was leading had been so spectacularly unsuccessful. For one thing, the two men she was guiding were lousy shots. For another, Felix Wagner and his sidekick Andy Taylor hadn't seemed to care if they made a kill nor not. Over the past couple of days they'd spent half their time gazing at maps and writing in notebooks. Maybe it was just the romance of the High Arctic, they were after, the promise of living authentically in the wild with the Eskimo, like the expedition brochure promised. Still, she thought, they but they wouldn't be living long if they couldn't bring down something to eat. She poured the boiling berg water into a thermos containing qungik, which white people called Labrador tea, and set aside the rest for herself. You had to travel more than 3000 kilometres south from Unmingmak Nuna, Ellesmere Island, where they were now, to find qungik growing on the tundra, but for some reason southerners thought Labrador tea was more authentic, so it was what she always served to her hunting clients. For herself, she preferred Soma brand English Breakfast, brewed with iceberg water, sweetened with plenty of sugar and enriched with a knob of seal blubber. In any case, what really mattered was not the kind of tea as the fact that it was brewed with melted berg. A client once told her that in the south, the water had been through the bowels of dinosaurs before it even reached the faucet, whereas berg water had lain frozen and untouched by animal or human being pretty much since time began. Just one of the reasons, Edie guessed, that southerners were prepared to pay tens of thousands of dollars to come up this far north. In the case of Wagner and Taylor, it certainly wasn't for the hunting. Some time soon these two were about to get a deal more High Arctic authenticity than they'd bargained for. Not that they knew it yet. While Edie had been fixing tea, the wind had changed; squally easterlies were now sweeping in from the Greenlandic ice cap, suggesting a blizzard was on its way. Not imminently, but quite soon. There was still plenty of time enough to fill the flasks with tea and get back to the gravel beach where Edie had left the two men sorting out their camp. She threw another chunk of berg into the can and while the water was heating, she reached into her pack for her wedge of igunaq and cut off a few slices of the fermented walrus gut. The chewing of igunaq took some time, which was part of the point of igunaq, and as Edie worked the stuff between her teeth she allowed her thoughts to return to the subject of money and from there to stepson, Joe Inukpuk, who was the chief reason she was out here in the company of two men who couldn't shoot and one of whom, the tall, skinny fellow, the sidekick Taylor, was also a particular pain in the ass. Guiding paid better than the teaching that took up the remainder of her time, and Joe needed money if he was to get his nurses qualification. He couldn't expect to get any help from Sammy, his father and Edie's ex, or from his mother Minnie, so the money was going to have to come from Edie. Edie didn't spook easily; it took a lot to frighten an ex-polar bear hunter - but it scared her just how badly she wanted Joe to be able to do his nursing training. The Arctic was full of qalunaat professionals; white doctors, white nurses, lawyers, engineers and there was nothing wrong with most of them, but it was time Inuit produced their own professional class. Joe was certainly smart enough and he seemed committed. If she was thrifty and lucky with clients, she thought she could probably save enough this coming summer to put him through the first year of school. Guiding hunting expeditions was no big deal, like going out on the land with a couple of toddlers in tow. She already knew every last glacier, fiord or esker for five hundred miles around better than she knew the contours of her own body. And no one knew better than Edie how to hunt. The bit of berg had melted and she was unscrewing the top of the first thermos when a sharp, whipping crack cut through the gloom and so startled her that she dropped the flask. The hot liquid instantly vaporised into a plume of ice crystals, which trembled ever so slightly in disrupted air. The hunter in her knew that sound, the precise, particular pop of 7mm ammunition fired from hunting rifle, something not unlike the Remington 700s her clients were carrying. She squinted across the sea ice, hoping to a clue as to what had happened, but her view of the beach was obscured by the berg. Up ahead, to the east of the beach, the tundra stared blankly back, immense and uncompromising. A gust of wind whipped frost smoke off the icepack. She felt a surge of irritation. What the hell did the qalunaat think they were doing when they were supposed to be setting up camp? Firing at game? Given their lack of enthusiasm for the shoot, that seemed unlikely. Maybe a bear had come too close

and they were letting off a warning shot, though if that were the case, it was odd that her bear dog, Bonehead, hadn't picked up the scent and started barking. A dog as sensitive to bear as Bonehead could scent a bear a couple of kilometres away. There was nothing for it but to investigate. Until they got back to the settlement at Autisag, the men were officially her responsibility and these days, Edie Kiglatuk took her responsibilities seriously. She retrieved the flask, impatient with herself for having dropped it and spilled the water, then, checking her rifle, began lunging at her usual, steady, pace through deep drift towards the snowmobile. As she approached, Bonehead, who was tethered to the trailer, lifted his head and flapped his tail. Definitely no bear he could smell. Edie gave the animal a pat and tied in her cooking equipment. As she was packing the flasks under the tarp, a sharp, breathless cry flew past and echoed out over the sea ice and Bonehead began to bark. In an instant, Edie felt her neck stiffen and a thudding started up in her chest. Someone began shouting for help. The voice sounded like it belonged to the tall, skinny one. Fool had already forgotten the advice she'd given them to stay quiet when they were out on the land. Up here, shouting could bring down a wall of ice or an avalanche of powder snow. It could alert a passing bear. She considered calling out to him to stop hollering, but she was downwind from the hunters and knew her voice wouldn't carry. Hissing to Bonehead to shut up, to herself she said: *Ikuliaq!* Stay calm! One of the men must have had an accident. It wasn't uncommon. In the twelve years she'd been guiding southern hunters, Edie had seen more of those than there are char in a spawn pond; puffed up egos, in the Arctic for the first time, laden down with self-importance and high-tech kit, neither of which they really knew how to handle, thinking it was going to be just like the duck shoot in Iowa they went on last Thanksgiving or the New Years deer cull in Wyoming. Then they got out on the sea ice and things didn't seem quite so easy. If the bears didn't spook them, then the blistering cold, the scouring winds, the ferocious sun and the roar of the ice pack usually did the job. They'd stave off their fear with casual bravado and booze and that was when the accidents began. She set the snowbie going and made her way around the iceberg and through a ridge of tuniq, slabby pressure ice. The wind was up now and blowing ice crystals into the skin around her eyes. When she pulled on her snowgoggles, the crystals migrated to the sensitive skin around her mouth. She felt less like a human being than one of those voodoo dolls she'd seen on TV. So long as no one had been seriously wounded, she told herself, they could all just sit out the storm and wait for help to arrive once the weather had calmed. She put up a snowhouse to keep them cosy and she had a first aid kit and enough knowledge to be able to use it.

Revue de presse M.J. McGrath opens a window onto a fascinating and disappearing culture in this haunting mystery. Parade Magazine "12 Great Summer Books" [McGrath] weaves a strong strand of whodunit into a broader story about life in a 21st-century community on Canada's Ellesmere Island. The plot is wholly satisfying, and McGrath's portrait of a culture that uneasily blends yesterday and today is engrossing on its own merits. The Arctic is a big place big enough, one hopes, for Edie Kiglatuk to find another mystery that needs solving between warm bowls of seal blood soup fresh from the microwave. Associated Press In a gripping debut novel, McGrath (who has written nonfiction as Melanie McGrath) transports the reader to a land of almost incomprehensible cold and an unfamiliar but fascinating culture, taking on issues of climate change, energy exploration, local politics, and drug and alcohol abuse. Edie, a fiercely independent woman in a male-dominated milieu, is sure to win fans. Expect great things from this series. Booklist (starred review) An arctic setting so real it'll give you frostbite. Dana Stabenow, author of *A Cold Day for Murder* and *Though Not Dead: A Shugak Nov* A solid thriller A picture soon emerges that includes a fight for precious natural resources and secrets that stretch back generations. McGrath captures the frigid landscape beautifully, and her heroine personifies the tension between the Inuit and qalunaat ways of life. Publishers Weekly This debut novel encompasses the hard, otherworldly beauty of the far north and the rapaciousness of energy moguls determined to exploit the area's natural resources [McGrath] skillfully describes the destabilizing effects of global warming, on both the landscape and the lives of the people settled there. The New Yorker *White Heat* is a blazing star of a thriller: vivid, tightly-sprung, and satisfying on all levels. Encountering Edie Kiglatuk, the toughest, smartest Arctic heroine since Miss Smilla, left me with that rare feeling of privilege you get on meeting extraordinary people in real life. A huge achievement. Liz Jensen, bestselling author of *The Rapture* M. J. McGrath's *White Heat* pulls you along like a steel cable, inexorably welding you to the characters and a place that you'll never forget. Craig Johnson, New York Times bestselling author of *Hell Is Empty* With a poet's confidence McGrath makes an unforgiving Arctic landscape, and then gives us a smart and strong yet vulnerable survivor in Edie Kiglatuk. You root for Edie. You can't do otherwise. In her risk-all pursuit of truth resides the best in all of us. Kirk Russell, author of *Redback: A John Marquez Crime Novel* "M.J. McGrath's *White Heat* is a tour de force, a book with a

stunning grip on all the elements that make a mystery story great. The characters are unique and profoundly human, the plot wonderfully labyrinthine, and the sense of place beautifully chillingly evoked. I challenge any reader to pick up this marvelous novel and not be completely mesmerized." William Kent Kreuger, author of Vermilion Drift

William Kent Kreuger Once in a blue moon a book comes along that exposes the world to us in a new light, makes us question everything: who we are, what we think we know, our beliefs and values, even the nature and purpose of our existence. White Heat is such a book. Seek it out and bask in it.

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James Thompson, author of Lucifer's Tears Val McDermid