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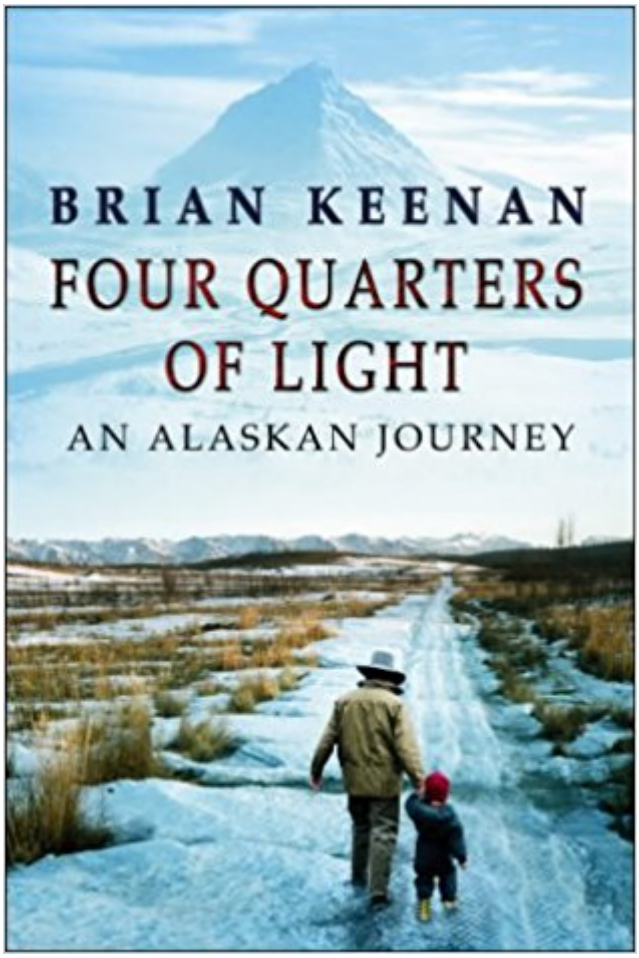
# FOUR QUARTERS OF LIGHT: AN ALASKAN JOURNEY

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## Synopsis

Brian Keenan’s fascination with Alaska began as a small boy choosing his first library book in a Belfast school. The book was Jack London’s wondrous Call of the Wild. And it has permeated Keenan’s life ever since.A short visit to Fairbanks several years ago was enough to seal his connection with the place and he resolved to return. Last year he did so with a head full of questions about its inspiring landscape and heart informed with his own love of the desolate and barren places of the world. In the course of a journey that takes him through four geographical quarters from snowmelt in May to snowfall in September, he discovers a land as fantastical as a fairytale but whose vastness has a very peculiar type of allure. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Inspired by boyhood memories of reading Jack London’s The Call of the Wild, Keenan (An Evil Cradling) travels from his native Ireland to Alaska with his wife and young sons in this memoir that was first published in the U.K. in 2004. Like most who first experience the wilds of Alaska from the comfort of an armchair, Keenan soon discovers that family travel through the great wilderness is more difficult than his romantic notions had prepared him for. Writing with insight, Keenan is adept at communicating the frigidity of the natural landscape, as well as its sturdy people. He treads carefully among the wildlife and its caretakers, learning about Alaska from a hired guide who allows him entry to events that most travelers are kept far away from. Keenan, with and without his family, drives a dog sled under the night sky, fights "blizzards" of mosquitoes, visits a gold mine and talks to

many Alaskan inhabitants who have remained despite the unrelenting climate. Although his writing can get bogged down with repetitive comments on the state's power and elusiveness ("Alaska never stays still long enough for you to get a hold on it"), Keenan's strength is in his respect for Alaska's strong simplicity. (Sept.) Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Praise for An Evil Cradling:â œA moving and remarkable triumph.â •â ”Independent on SundayPraise for Between Extremes:â œOne of the funniest and most moving testaments to friendship that one is likely to readâ •â ”Sunday Timesâ œSuch an absorbing subject, so deeply and warmly expressedâ •â ”Daily Telegraphâ œThey take us every step of the way with a wonderfully infectious joie de vivreâ •â ”Independent on Sunday --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What was expected from this author, and this book, was never delivered. The narrative passages are workmanlike, but his interpersonal encounters are dismally unfleshed. I soon got tired of the ham-fisted way he deals with his and others feelings and the way he rubs up against them. I would have found him poor company on the road, as I suspect some Alaskans did. By the time he got me to page 163, in the cab of Tex' rig on the Truckers Road I had reached a "don't care" relationship with him - and then he dropped his credentials again by describing Tex as saying he carried a ".395 Magnum" when he checked his traps. It *could* be a typo, that's true, but going on the form this author had amassed by this point in the book I suspect he actually wrote that down. Why does this matter ? becuase a writer needs to be scrupulous with his research and his detail. I stopped at that point in the book, and returned it to the library, quite pleased it was a borrowed book that I had not wasted good money on. I accept that for many naive readers this book will give pleasure - and that's fine. But Alaska deserved a better author, and his readers deserve a more polished writer with less self-absorbtion.

Brian Keenan is undoubtedly a talented writer. He conjures up the places and inhabitants of his Alaskan journey with vivid precision. At first, his fumbling cultural faux pas provided some amusement. But eventually, they got frustrating and detracted from my enjoyment of his story. There's some self-effacing humor throughout as he confesses to his cluelessness, but when I got to a chapter in which he imagined a spirited conversation between himself and a crow, I gave it up. By that point, Keenan reminded me of the character of the BBC reporter in Robert Altman's "Nashville."

Too "deep" for his own good, and kind of missing the point.

A wonderful insight not just into the cold mosquito ridden vastness of Alaska, the life of native people, the eccentricities of the inhabitants, but the spiritual searching of the author.Beautifully written.

I was enjoying the book UNTIL the part where he and his family arrive in a campground outside of Fairbanks.As he is taking a stroll, he comments that he sees several campers with "Jesus Loves You" and "Are you saved?" He then HAS to add these comments "Where do all these people come from?" and that "I wish they would stay away."...or something to that effect. He then closes the paragraph by stating, "I could not get away fast enough."Gee this guy really shows some tolerance. He has no idea who these people are and yet he has to put THIS in his book???...which is TOTALLY not necessary. Sorry but this book has been "deep sixed" after I read it.

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