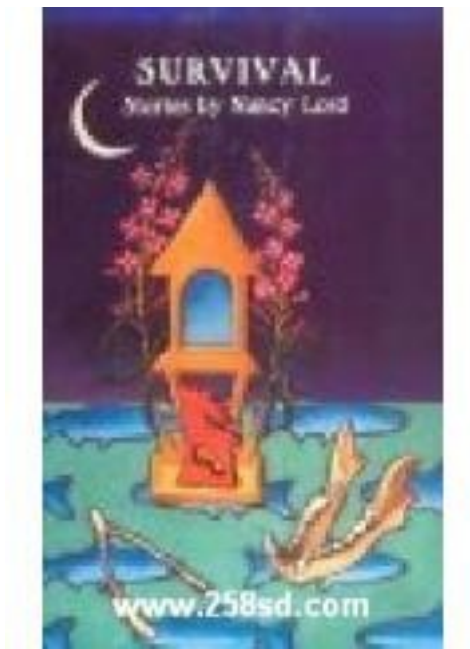


Survival: Stories



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780918273840

From Publishers Weekly In 15 stories, Alaska looms as a presence that variously is vast and claustrophobic, dangerous and freeing, exhilarating and depressing. A long-time resident frets over and envies a newcomer whose hunger for wild and solitude defies common sense. Elsewhere, an aging hippy tries to woo his estranged daughter with moosemeat pizza and bleached pelican skull knickknacks, but she's a creature of civilization's comforts, committed to Walkman music and double-scoop ice-cream sundaes. Her husband is away drilling for oil and a resentful wife must cope alone with an erupting volcano; a woman leaves the bush for Anchorage and abandons a friend in the process; a miserly recluse wins the lottery; and a thief discovers his girlfriend can kill without remorse. The prose here is pleasantly understated, the tenor of Alaskan existence often is transmitted ("You don't live in a

small Alaskan town for the job you can get; you do whatever job you can in order to be able to live in such a place.") and many descriptions, such as shrimp processing in an Alaskan cannery, are authentically rendered. But hampered by obvious and trite plotting, the collection doesn't rise above merely competent. A commercial fisherman in Alaska, Lord wrote *The Compass Inside Ourselves*. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* The cold, the majesty, the isolation, the escape from a world that is closing in too tightly--it is all here in this haunting collection of short stories set in Alaska. Alaska is known for its characters, and Lord presents quite a variety in these stories of survival. In the title story, a long-time resident watches as a newcomer is overcome by a sense of isolation she is unprepared for. In "Volcano," a woman homesteads alone two weeks of every four while her husband works at oil drilling; though she must contend with fires, storms, and even a volcano erupting during her days alone, her husband cannot appreciate the hardship of her life. A newspaper reporter breaks out of his boring routine in Baltimore to travel to Anchorage for the Iditarod race after interviewing "The Lady with the Sled Dog." As Eric, a wanna-be Alaskan, says in "Snowblind," "Some of us need Alaska, even if it's only in our minds." Lord's stories deserve a wide readership.-Debbie Tucker, Cincinnati Tech Coll., Ohio Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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目录:

[Survival: Stories_下载链接1_](#)

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[Survival: Stories_下载链接1_](#)

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