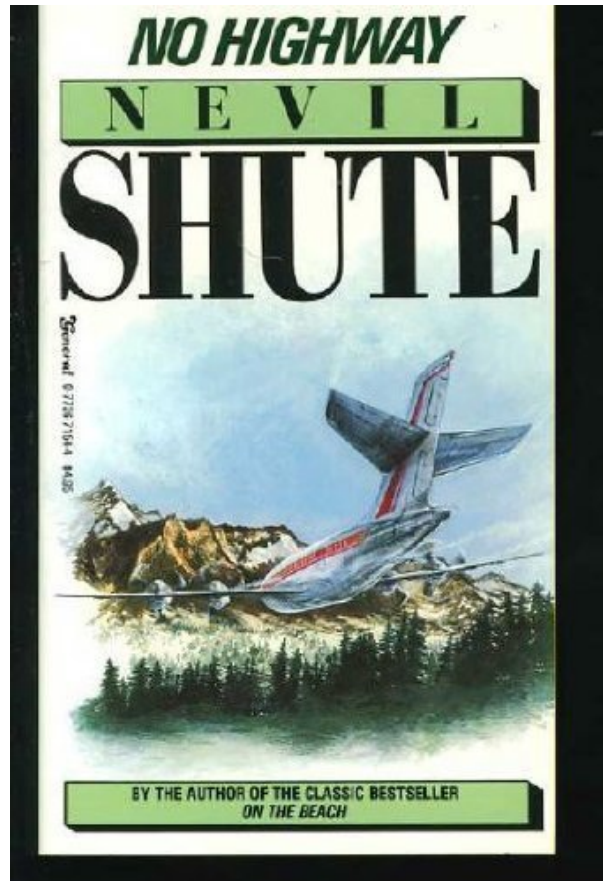
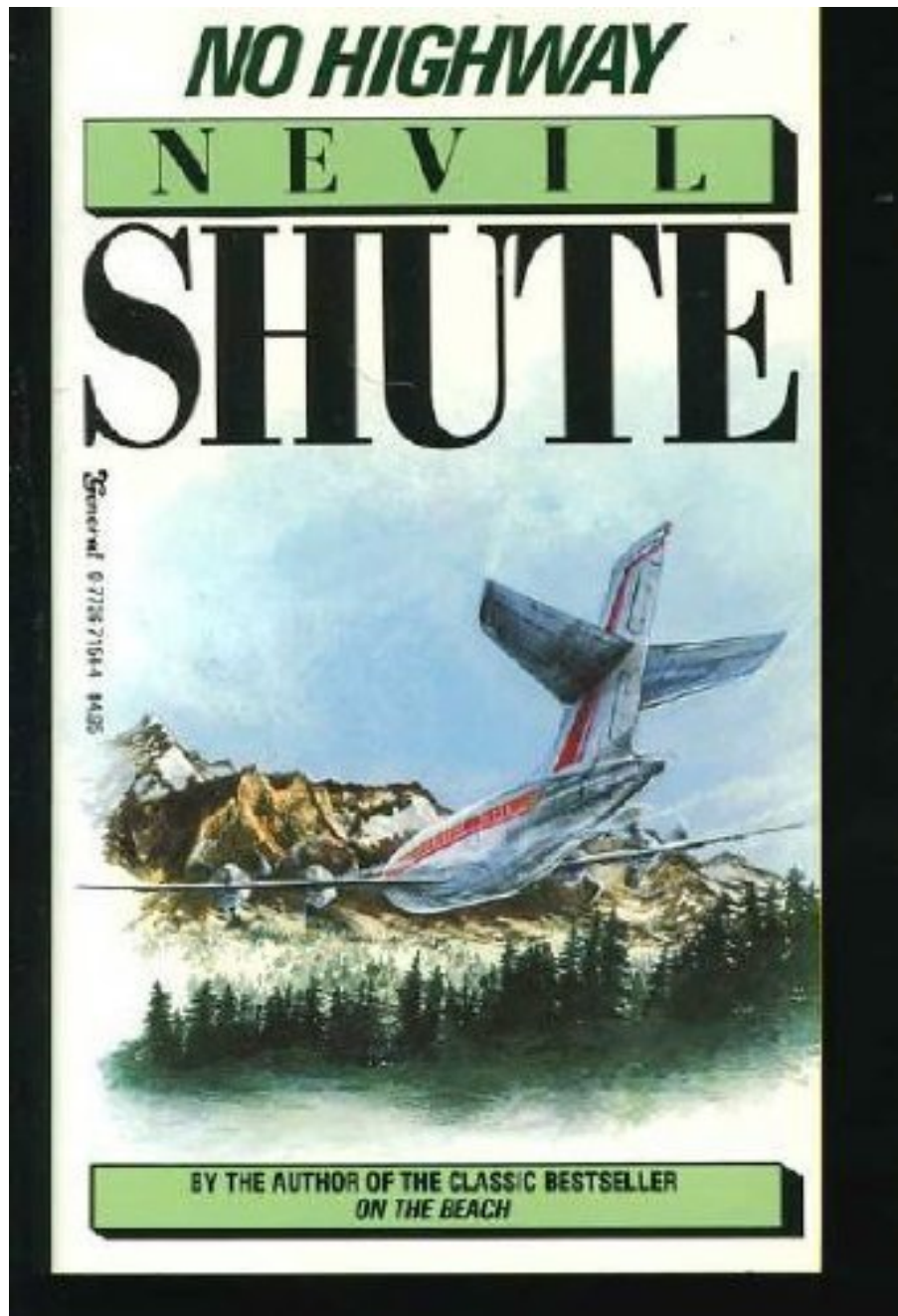


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When a passenger plane crashes in unexplained circumstances, Theodore Honey, a shy inconspicuous aircraft engineer with eccentric interests in quantum mechanics and spiritualism, must convince his superiors that his unorthodox theories are correct before more lives are lost.

- Sales Rank: #370917 in Books
- Published on: 1948
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
- 287 pages

Most helpful customer reviews

33 of 33 people found the following review helpful.

An uplifting story that may seem trite these days...

By R. L. MILLER

...after all, this is an age of cynicism. It's the story of nerdy scientist Theodore Honey (the British term of that time was "boffin"--it specifically targeted scientists) who discovers a potentially deadly flaw in a new airliner. The problem is that nobody but his boss Dr. Scott (from whose viewpoint this story is told) has any faith in his theory. After all, oddballs don't have very high credibility factors. So Scott sends Honey over to Canada to investigate a recent crash of one of those planes, only to have it turn out that the plane he takes is also one of that model. Which makes for a particularly gripping scene--it's the centerpiece of the James Stewart movie based on this book. Other important characters here are Honey's motherless daughter, an actress he's a fan of who's also on the flight--he reminds her of an old friend she knew before she became famous, the plane's captain who is increasingly unsure that Honey is a crackpot, plus a stewardess who not only shares her captain's point of view--but finds Honey strangely compelling in an even more important way. Nowadays you don't often find this human a story in so short a book. Shute's best known book is "On The Beach".

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

The technology is dated--the story isn't.

By Gary M. Greenbaum

When Dr. Theodore Honey, a boffin of an aviation scientist, predicts that the wings on a new type of aircraft will begin falling off, he is sent across to Canada to investigate a previous crash. Bad choice--he is so unimpressive that when he learns that the aircraft he is on has already exceeded his estimated time to failure, he can only stop the flight by wrecking it when it stops to refuel at Gander. Almost everyone believes he's crazy except for a few--including the assistant director at his place of work, a stewardess, and a movie actress.

Shute is at his best in his characterizations--such as Monica Teasdale the fading American movie actress, who falls in love with Honey as she once did with a man before she became famous. She soon realizes she can never have Honey and must step aside for the stewardess, who can give him children and maintain him in his work, as well as give him love. The details are amusing--the actress, from Indiana, uses the word "hoosier" to the mystification of the British characters

As in most of Shute's books, there are no villains. The fact that many of the characters are working against

each other does not make any of them evil, and when the truth is revealed, they quickly begin to work together.

For the information of readers, the book made a fairly poor movie starring (I kid you not), Jimmy Stewart as Honey. But as so few of Shute's books were made into movies, it is worth watching for that reason.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

They don't write them like that any more

By Roger Brunyate

This 1948 novel was one of the first adult books I read as a boy; remembering it fondly, I wanted to see how it stood up now. The brief answer: very well, although it shows its age. Such a book could never be published today, and in many ways that is a pity.

Nevil Shute Norway was an aircraft engineer by profession, and most of his novels (of which *A TOWN LIKE ALICE* is the best-known) touch to some degree on flying; in *NO HIGHWAY*, aircraft engineering is the entire background. The narrator, Dennis Scott, is head of a research department at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, England. One of his scientists, a rather unworldly widower named Theodore Honey, is convinced that Britain's latest transatlantic passenger aircraft, the Reindeer, is liable to catastrophic metal fatigue in the tail after so many hours' flying time, and convinces Scott that all Reindeers must be grounded before they approach that maximum. Unfortunately, two aircraft have already reached the danger point. One has recently crashed in a remote area of Labrador, and when Honey is sent out to investigate, he discovers he is traveling in the other one.

Shute's strength is that he writes what he knows, straightforwardly and without frills. He assumes that the reader will be interested in the technology, and in the bureaucratic procedures that Scott must go through to convince the appropriate agencies of the danger. It is true that some of Honey's theories sound kooky, to put it mildly, and it is hard to believe that time-to-fracture is as predictable as he makes out. But in 1954, six years after the book was published, Britain's Comet fleet, the world's first commercial passenger jet aircraft, suffered a series of fatal accidents that were ultimately put down to metal fatigue; the episode essentially ended Britain's domination of the transatlantic market. That era was about to change anyhow; one of the pleasures of the book is to go back before the jumbo jet, when transatlantic aircraft has to refuel at places like Gander in Newfoundland, and carried only a few dozen passengers in easy luxury.

NO HIGHWAY is also a heart-warming love story. This requires some suspension of contemporary cynicism, for Shute's character painting (especially his women, often referred to as "girls") now seems rather simplistic, in common with many of the popular writers of his generation. They don't write them like that any more -- with one notable exception: I suspect that the popularity of Alexander McCall Smith (author of *THE SUNDAY PHILOSOPHY CLUB*) is precisely because he too writes in the simple emotional terms of his boyhood reading. If you want Smith's warmth applied to more boyish subjects, you might do worse than look into Shute.

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