



## High Citadel

*Desmond Bagley*

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In the biting cold of the Andes, their hi-jacked plane crash-landed, Tim O'Hara's passengers are fighting for their lives. While O'Hara leads one group along a deadly, snow-covered pass, the other is working to stall the armed soldiers who plan to kill them all. Ingenious ideas are put into action as they attempt to survive until help arrives.

## High Citadel Details

Date : Published September 1st 2002 by House of Stratus (first published 1965)

ISBN : 9781842320129

Author : Desmond Bagley

Format : Paperback 287 pages

Genre : Thriller, Adventure, Fiction, Action, Mystery

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## From Reader Review High Citadel for online ebook

### Alayne says

Excellent and a different kind of story which made a change.  
I will certainly read more from Mr. Bagley :)

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### Booniss says

The politics may be somewhat dated and the villains no more than caricature, but ignore those and you are left with a taut thriller about how ordinary people can rise to the occasion and fight for themselves and others. The characters are surprisingly modern too, with the women being treated equally to the men when it comes to whatever contribution they can make rather than being relegated to cooking duties. Fabulous story.

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### Diana Oliveira says

I already stated how much i love the books written by Desmond Bagley; from all i've read High Citadel is without a doubt my favourite.

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### Aakash says

eventually you'll feel cold.

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### Stuart McMillan says

Really shows its age and it's clearly from the same stable as Alistair MacLean with paper thin characterisation and stereotyping ('banana' republics, communist revolutions, fat and lazy Americans, heroic Americans haunted by the war etc) . The plot was ok tho and I'm surprised that this has not been given a Hollywood 'treatment' as it's got the ingredients to keep people entertained for a couple of hours. I did have a chuckle at one point when I recognised a scene that had been stolen completely and incorporated into the 1982 movie Firefox - I hope the Bagley estate got some corn for this!

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### Simon Mendoza says

great book, very exciting, you're not in there with the action but you understand how every character feels

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## **Tony says**

I'd never heard of Bagley before picking this up, but I gather he was a British action-thriller writer contemporary of Hammond Ines and Alistair Maclean. This was his second book, originally published in 1965 and displaying all the cliches of the Cold War-era thriller. The story is set in a fictional South American country adjacent to the Andes, where a decrepit American pilot flies for a tiny two-bit airline. A former jet-fighter pilot in Korea, he was shot down there and endured unimaginable horrors in a Chinese prison camp, leaving him scarred and unable to hold onto a decent job. Now flying for Andes Air, he's at the end of the line when he gets the call to come in and shuttle a load of passengers across the the mountains since their jumbo-jet was forced to land due to mechanical problems.

Without giving too much away, he's forced to crash land in the mountains and soon he and the surviving passengers are in a life-or-death struggle against the elements and a force of communist-sympathizing military who are about to launch a coup. There's one thread which follows some passengers who try and climb out to raise the alarm, and their trials and tribulations in mountain-climbing without proper gear. The other thread follows the passengers who try and MacGyver weapons to hold off the soldiers who are on the other side of a rickety rope bridge. Fortunately, in addition to the pilot, there's an academic with a more than passing knowledge of medieval weaponry, another academic who is awfully handy at building things, a schoolteacher who's handy with bows, and a young woman who isn't afraid of doing her part.

A basic premise of the story is that all these folks would be keen to fight to the death rather than surrender to dastardly Communists -- with lots of references to how Communists are basically all sadistic torturers. And naturally, the villains are led by a Cuban officer and a Russian handler, and one of the heroes is secretly a CIA agent. There's even another American who fulfills the cliché of the blowhard American whose cowardice puts everyone at risk. If you don't mind such gratingly dated characters, some major coincidences (two characters who happen to have flown the same Sabrejets used by the bad guys?) and some shockingly poor tactical choices by the soldiers (For example, at one point most of the heroes are cornered in a cave, but the soldiers are apparently too afraid to rush them because they have a submachine gun and so instead call for jets to attack the cave with rockets. One of many alternative approaches would have been to simply approach the cave from the side and pitch a grenade or two in, instantly solving the issue.), it's a reasonably fun adventure tale.

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## **Joanne says**

It's been many years since I first read this. On this latest reading, it's aged in terms of its political relevance... But in many ways, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Stranded in the Andes after a plane crash, broken down pilot Tim O'Hara must somehow hold the little band together against a group of communist revolutionaries waiting on the other side of the bridge.

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## **????? says**

I came across way back when, and still it remains the best for me. The epitome of the adventure thriller, complete with gritty, tormented hero, sinister villain and a gallimaufry of supporting cast members who all serve to enrich this super-tense high altitude classic. Outnumbered and outgunned, worn-out pilot Tim O'Hara must defend himself and the lives of his passengers when his plane crashes high in the Andes, and bring together an eclectic bunch of characters to outwit the communist forces determined to put a stop,

permanently, to the political aspirations of the democratic candidate who was on board. Ingenious, engaging, non-stop thrills.

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### **Lis says**

Un discreto libro di avventura, anche se dal finale "ovviamente" scontato. Anche se a tratti sembra un po' inverosimile, tutto sommato è una buona lettura poco impegnata.

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### **Huw Collingbourne says**

A fairly straightforward story, by Bagley's standards, about good guys fighting bad guys with lots of action and adventure and just a touch of romance. This was his 2nd novel and it is much more predictable and less interesting than his later novels (such as Running Blind, The Freedom Trap or The Tightrope Men). It seems to be written very much in the Alistair MacLean style, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but I must say that I very much prefer Bagley's later novels which had a bit less action and adventure but far more plot twists and turns.

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### **Libbeth says**

Review from Amazon:

#### Book Description

Isolated in the biting cold of the Andes, after their plane has been hijacked and forced to crash-land, Tim O'Hara's passengers are fighting for their lives. While one group of survivors, lead by O'Hara, attempt to cross the peaks along a deadly, snow-covered pass, the other is working to stall the armed group of soldiers who plan to kill them all once they have managed to cross a torrential river. Ingenious ideas are put into action in a dramatic attempt to prolong their survival until help arrives.

#### About the Author

Celebrated for his fast-paced stories and attention to detail, thriller writer Desmond Bagley was born in the Lake District and spent his early working life in the aircraft industry, before his adventurous spirit took him on an exciting road trip to South Africa, where he settled as a freelance journalist and film critic. His first novel, The Golden Keel was an instant success, and he went on to write a further fifteen gripping stories, which have been translated into more than 20 languages.

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### **Rogermue says**

Bagley really can tell thrilling stories. I enjoyed this one about O'Hara's fight high up in the Andes with a couple of men and almost no weapons against a communist army.

## Jack says

One of the best books I have ever read, medieval weapons against a modern day communist army, what could be better?

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## Mook says

\*3.5 stars

Pure pleasure read. A short, fun, action-adventure in which a plane is forcibly crashed in the mountains and the survivors need to face both the harsh climate and the squad of gunmen trying to kill them.

As this is a book from the 60s, it has some period specific issues. For example, racism - which other characters are quick to condemn but really isn't necessary plot-wise. Another quirk is that the main villains are "communists". Just, collectively, as a group of people of different nationalities who are all devoted to communism.

Pushing that aside, the book is a neat match up of "survival story" and "action story." The pilot, O'Hara, is forced to make a rough landing (more of a crash) in the mountains as a group of communists want to kill one of the passengers, an ex-president of a fictional south American country who is returning to try and bring democracy back to his country. The survivors are an odd collection: a profesor of medieval weaponry who's designs for crossbows and such help the group fend off the soldiers, none of which could be built if not for the help of a very handy fellow who seems able to make anything from old mining equipment, a professor who happens to be a crack shot with a bow, a CIA agent pretending to be a business man, the ex-president along with his niece and bodyguard, a drunkard, and the pilot.

If you think this is the setup for hilarity, you are correct! only with 100% more death as at least half the cast dies by the time the book is over. Overall, very entertaining cottage read.

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## Dominique says

Een erg goed boek!

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## Ruth says

c1965. I seem to recall through the haze of the past that this book started off my liking for a good disaster novel! It was around the same time that I discovered Alistair MacLean and Hamond Innes. It was probably a backlash against the reading trend of my peers for Mills and Boons and Danielle Steel.

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## **Masayuki Arai says**

very talented team lol

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## **Matt Kruze says**

The first Bagley I came across way back when, and still it remains the best for me. The epitome of the adventure thriller, complete with gritty, tormented hero, sinister villain and a gallimaufry of supporting cast members who all serve to enrich this super-tense high altitude classic.

Outnumbered and outgunned, worn-out pilot Tim O'Hara must defend himself and the lives of his passengers when his plane crashes high in the Andes, and bring together an eclectic bunch of characters to outwit the communist forces determined to put a stop, permanently, to the political aspirations of the democratic candidate who was on board.

Ingenious, engaging, non-stop thrills.

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## **Nick says**

(audiobook)

4.5

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