



# Nine Nights

*Bernardo Carvalho*

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## **Nine Nights** Bernardo Carvalho

This powerful, award-winning Brazilian novel is reminiscent of Naipaul, Faulkner and Conrad in its exploration of human behaviour on the edges of civilization.

In August 1939, a twenty-seven-year old American ethnologist, brilliant and from a solid background, mysteriously commits suicide in Brazil while studying among the tribes of the Amazonian basin. He leaves behind him seven letters, alleging different motives for his suicide: to some, he said he had contracted a terrible disease; to others, he said that he could not recover from his wife's betrayal with his own brother (but he wasn't married, and he didn't have a brother).

In the present, the narrator becomes obsessed with the search for an eighth letter he is convinced must have existed.

As the reader observes, his search slowly drives him mad — a Marlowe haunted by the fate of his own Kurtz. This is truly a remarkable novel.

## **Nine Nights Details**

Date : Published April 3rd 2007 by William Heinemann (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780434012954

Author : Bernardo Carvalho

Format : Hardcover 288 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Brazil, Novels

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## From Reader Review *Nine Nights* for online ebook

### Michaela says

This is somewhere between a 3 and a 4. I did really like it, but at the same time, it was a difficult read. Quite disjointed. Granted, that may be part of its plot-line. Everything is a disjunction between truth and lies in this book and Carvalho clearly wants his reader to be as confused as his narrator is. Still, there are parts where it gets a bit fuzzy even given that assumption. Intriguing look into reality, though. Good book, even with the fuzzy parts.

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### Rita says

Um romance mais ou menos policial e histórico com uma narrativa jornalística. Os ingredientes estavam bem equilibrados para fazer uma boa *estória*, mas achei tudo muito confuso o que frustrou a leitura. O final também não ajudou em nada a melhorar a experiência.

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### Jeroen Van de Crommenacker says

Interesting premise, but ultimately very disappointing read. Tries to hard to be complex and innovative in structure, but fails and also the story is just not interesting enough

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### Fernando Hisi says

Esse furou a fila. A resenha começa com "na noite de 2 de agosto..." pô, meu aniversário. Sobre o suicídio de um antropologista no meio do Brasil e um jornalista que decide escrever um livro.

Eu fiquei bem preso nesse, deixei de lado tudo o que estava lendo junto.

A escrita é boa, mais pro tradicional, pro limpo, quase transparente. Dessas coisas que quem não sabe fazer inveja muito. Curti o mistério, como ele constrói, mas ele é tão bom que a resolução fica meio fuén. Ele canta a bola da "morte violenta" o livro todo e quando chega a hora do vamo ver, uma frase. Afff. As partes que eu mais gostei tão entuxadas ali no final, quando ele sai do vai-e-vem das cartas e mostra mais do personagem do romancista. Ele começa os "capítulos" todos com a mesma frase, para cada personagem. Achei bem legal, mas no final parece que desencana, ou cansa e vai abrindo mão. Tem uma hora que parece que aglutina os capítulos. Não sei se como metáfora de um romancista que não consegue achar o seu romance ou se sei lá, desencanou mesmo. Aliás, o final é bem nessas tb.

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### **Felix Pütsch says**

The story had many interesting elements, but I found it hard to follow. Also, the ending left me confused.

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### **Paulo Fehlauer says**

Como define o próprio autor, trata-se de "uma combinação de memória e imaginação - como todo romance, em maior ou menor grau, de forma mais ou menos direta". E tal combinação é tecida com maestria por Bernardo Carvalho.

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### **Gabriel Franklin says**

"Isso é para quando você vier."

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### **Johan says**

I read this book in 2009. I remember it as a very suggestiv, dark and fantastic book. Reality och fiction mixed in brilliant way. Loved it! Never read anything like it before or after.

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### **Luiz da Motta says**

Adorei!

Terminei há pouco e ainda sinto vertigem pela mistura que o autor faz entre realidade e ficção. Quando encontrar com ele vou questionar onde está a fronteira entre ambas.

Talvez ã... Melhor deixar essa discussão pra Rancière, que Bernardo tanto curte.

Até porque mitos sempre fecundam a realidade.

Nove Noites é prova disso. Mais uma vez, em 500 anos, a Amazônia é retratada como o paraíso (ou inferno) de incontáveis mistérios.

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### **Violeta Petrovska says**

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## **Sal says**

An amazing book. read it and fast. I'm hoping to write about it at so-called greater length soon.

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## **Carlos Freitas says**

A história mistura fatos reais com ficção. Demorei para engrenar na narrativa quase jornalística que compõe toda a primeira metade do livro. O estilo seco continua sem trégua até o final, com excessão das partes que correspondem às cartas de Manoel Perna. Fica mais interessante a partir do ponto em que o narrador passa a equilibrar o relato de fatos acontecidos há muitos anos com a sua própria experiência na tribo dos Krahô. Sem dúvida os trechos que detalham as crenças e costumes estranhos das tribos Krahô e Trumai foram os que mais me prenderam.

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## **Gunni Thorvalds says**

Horribly boring. Reads like a report.

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## **Ilyhana Kennedy says**

When I finished reading this novel, I immediately returned to the beginning and read it again. It's extraordinarily complex and convoluted. It took two careful readings to fully grasp the intricacies of the storyline.

It's a very strange unusual novel in its construction. In the first reading it took a long time to "get into" the story. The writing style is stiff and formal. As the plot began to open up (but not without mystery) so did the writing style. It's hard to grasp who is talking at times. The author has set an exacting task for the reader. There are many characters in this story and shifting time sequences and this doesn't assist reader comprehension.

It took the second reading to appreciate the masterly writing skill of the author. However an author can write a reader out of the process of telling a story. It is a very clever novel, almost cunning. However it would benefit from being a little more reader accessible.

Lyrical it is not.

There is an ethic in question here with this novel. It's the thing that once a person is dead you can say what you like about them and not be called for slander. That practice denies what the ancestor's reputation means to his or her descendants.

This story is written about an actual person and events, using the person's name and the names of associates. Rather than it being a biography, the writer has declared it a work of fiction. How So?

Conclusions that the author has drawn from speculation might just as easily be regarded as posthumous defamation of character.

Oddly enough, before reading much of the story, I happened to look at the photos of both the author and the main character of the story and thought they were the same person. The resemblance is striking. Hmmm.

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## Gláucia Renata says

Passei boa parte do livro tentando descobrir que é o narrador da história, no final percebi que isso não muda muita coisa. É criado um bom clima de suspense em torno do motivo que teria levado o etnólogo estadunidense Buell Quain a cometer suicídio entre os índios brasileiros em agosto de 1939, após uma troca de correspondência. Toda minha atenção se focou nesse ponto, li avidamente a fim de elucidar esse grande mistério. Li o final 2 vezes, gosto de livros que te permitem chegar a suas próprias conclusões. Dúbio... Como O Afinador de Pianos de Daniel Mason.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwLhzM...>

## HISTÓRICO DE LEITURA

"Cada um lê os poemas como pode e neles entende o que quer, aplica o sentido dos versos à sua própria experiência acumulada até o momento em que os lê."

"Isto é para quando você vier. É preciso estar preparado. Alguém terá que preveni-lo. Vai entrar numa terra em que a verdade e a mentira não tem mais os sentidos que o trouxeram até aqui."

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## Tea Jovanovi? says

Divan brazilski autor i knjigu koju od srca preporu?ujem pravim ljubiteljima dobre knjige...

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## Luiza says

A leitura não eu das mais fáceis -- não pelos termos utilizados pelo autor, mas sim pela complicada ordem em que as peças do quebra-cabeça são dispostas ao longo da leitura. É um livro rápido de ler, mas confesso que achei ele simplório, sem grandes reflexões.

-- o que é curioso, dado que o personagem central da história parece sofrer de uma angústia terrível.

A maior parte das páginas é dedicada a pontuar fatos aqui e acolá, montando o mosaico em que se baseia o romance. E quando o narrador tem acesso ao que parece ser a "cola" para todo esse mistério o livro se esvai rapidamente em poucas páginas. Não deixa de ser uma forma válida de se terminar um livro, mas eu particularmente fiquei um pouco decepcionada. Acho que eu espera um pouco mais de relatos sobre as emoções do narrador -- ou mesmo do personagem principal.

Não é um livro ruim, de forma alguma. Mas acredito que tenham livros bem mais ricos a serem lidos do que esse.

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## **Simon Barton says**

It was ok but not one of my favorite reads. A story of a ethnologist who committed suicide whilst studying a tribe in Brazil leads to a an obsessive seeker of the truth investigating the suicide. Didn't really grab me.

Author was born in Brazil

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## **Kamila says**

This book may be a bit difficult to read (in other words, not generally likable), but its style is certainly interesting. The story line is simple: the narrator is investigating a suicide of a young American anthropologist committed some 60 years ago in Brazil (this is the non-fictitious part of the story). The narrator's account of events alternates with letters written by a local friend of the deceased researcher, addressed to someone who was expected to come. The reconstruction of Buell Quain's life is very fragmentary and chaotic, composed of bits and pieces put together mostly from correspondence and few interviews with people who knew him or were somehow related to him. The narrator also throws in recollections of his childhood experiences with Indians (this is the autobiographical part).

In the case of this novel it is not so important WHAT is described, but HOW. Unlike typical mystery stories where one thing leads to another as discoveries are made in the course of investigation, nothing is presented with certainty here. It all happened long time ago. Evidence is fragmentary, motives unclear. The narrator probably does not possess all the clues; he is only human, after all. As the story progresses, there are more open points than ascertained facts. You share the narrator's confusion and frustration over the pieces of information that are lost forever. By the time you read the last page, you will find yourself thinking: "Did I miss something?" And maybe you start all over again, hoping that there must be an explanation. But does it really?

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## **Stanislav Stanchev says**

I read this book on a three-week trip across Brazil this summer. The fact that I was in Brazil and saw places and locations described in the book – like Lapa in Rio de Janeiro and Cuiaba in Mato Grosso – made the experience quite interesting. The book itself drew me in and kept me captivated from start to finish. In fact, I found myself unable to shake some of the imagery and the mystery that seemed impossible to solve. I was disturbed by it, but in spite of this (or because of this) I kept on turning the pages like a madman. The book is written in a quite unu-sual way with my realization that the author was blending facts and fiction increasing the sense of disturbed wonder that I felt while reading it. Carvalho jumps across time and repeats a number of phrases many times throughout the book, and ultimately the reason behind some of the text being in italics while others were not was revealed to me.

Ultimately, however, I was left with a sense of unease and incompleteness. I was not given the catharsis of a mystery truly solved. The ending did not satisfy me. Is this realistic outcome to the narrator's obsession and ultimately unsuccessful treasure hunt a message in its own? About how life is no Hollywood movie. Perhaps. And of course there are allusions to a possible solution to the riddle of the dead anthropologist. So for me, the book ended as it began and as it sustained me – strange, captivating and oddly disturbing. The best part was undoubtedly that I was also travelling through Brazil, making the images all the more vivid and near. Still, I do not expect it to be a book I will remember in detail for very long. But as a summer read, it was

exciting and entertaining in its own ways – and it does have some deeper commentary embedded that I may return to ponder over.

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