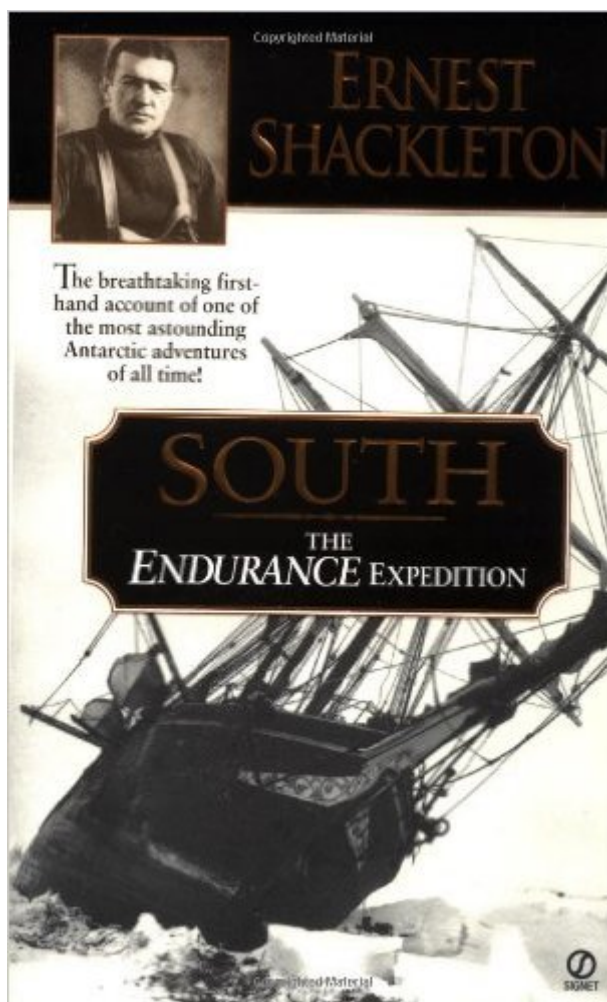


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South: The ENDURANCE Expedition



Synopsis

In 1914, as the shadow of war falls across Europe, a party led by veteran explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton sets out to become the first to traverse the Antarctic continent. Their initial optimism is short-lived, however, as the ice field slowly thickens, encasing the ship *Endurance* in a death-grip, crushing their craft, and marooning 28 men on a polar ice floe. In an epic struggle of man versus the elements, Shackleton leads his team on a harrowing quest for survival over some of the most unforgiving terrain in the world. Icy, tempestuous seas full of gargantuan waves, mountainous glaciers and icebergs, unending brutal cold, and ever-looming starvation are their mortal foes as Shackleton and his men struggle to stay alive. What happened to those brave men forever stands as a testament to their strength of will and the power of human endurance. This is their story, as told by the man who led them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although there have been a number of new books and reprints recently focusing on the *Endurance* expedition, this is the one book everyone should read, Sir Ernest Shackleton's own story of the tragedy he turned into a triumph. Shackleton fully covers the expedition from its inception, through the loss of the *Endurance*, the stranding of the men on desolate Elephant Island, the majestic small-boat journey in search of rescue to South Georgia, the many attempts to evacuate the men from Elephant Island, and the little-known story of the Ross Sea Party of the expedition, who established a base on the opposite side of the Antarctic continent to lay depots for the planned Antarctic crossing and in spite of horrible deprivation caused when their ship was swept out to sea

in a storm, managed to complete all their work laying the groundwork for a trip that never happened. After rescuing his men on Elephant Island, Shackleton had to rescue this party as well, something pretty much ignored in most modern books about the expedition. Very much worth reading; also read "Heart of the Antarctic," Shackleton's book about his earlier expedition.

It's tough to criticize a book written by the man himself and say that other books are somehow better, despite the fact that these writers did not participate in the journey. But unfortunately, that is the case. If you're a real Shackleton fan, you'll want to read this book only as background after taking on works by Caroline Alexander or Alfred Lansing. In comparison, 'South' has the following shortcomings: 1. The writing style is impenetrable & stilted. It has not aged well in the 80+ years since it was put down on paper. 2. The misuse of Frank Hurley's photographs is annoying - they're out-of-focus, oddly chosen and misplaced in sequence in the book. See Alexander's book for a revelation of the power and majesty of Hurley's work. 3. You only get Shackleton's point of view here. Lansing and Alexander pull together the journals of many participants and you get a real flavor of the men that comprise the crew. Here, you get only Sir Ernest, dispensing some kind words about each member, last name only, no background info. The other books tell you quite a bit about flawed characters like McNish and Lees.

This is the most astounding tale of survival I can recall. They weren't stranded in the Antarctic for days or weeks, or even months, but years. I'd only say that it is impossible for a reader to fully comprehend the degree of misery and privation these men endured. How do you fully describe the experience of living for 22 months in a single set of clothes, on ice, in rotting reindeer hide sleeping bags? If you liked Jon Krakauer's book, you will love this. I read this account, as well as the version by Caroline Alexander, and would recommend this version. Although this version had some photographs, Alexander's version had more extensive photographs.

What is even more interesting than the astonishing day to day labor of mere survival in hostile elements, is the way in which these men kept up their morale, how they faced those challenges. Fascinating reading, every page describes hardships you can't imagine not being fatal, and yet it's written in humble and straightforward narrative. At one point when clearly they were near death from starvation, thirst, cold and exhaustion, and floundering through unmarked wilderness a last bid to reach civilization or die, he remarks merely, "We were very tired". Interestingly, at one point when he and three others are crossing a mountain pass in jeopardy of their lives on a 3 day trek trying to find

a camp, each of them had the lingering feeling that there was a fourth person with them, but they only realized this when they compared notes after they reached safety. Again Shackleton refuses to sentimentalize the moment, even though he clearly believes God was literally guiding them, saying only that thanks must be given to the appropriate parties. This is dry English manliness of the type you rarely see except in parody anymore. What speaks best of these explorers qualities is that immediately after returning to civilization, after months of being in literal despair for their lives in unimaginable hardship, they rushed to enlist in the war. You'd think they would feel themselves entitled never to rise from a featherbed again. You would at least expect that their struggle for life in the rawest elements would have given them an aloof distance from mere human conflicts, or made them reluctant to kill other men. This book definitely has what *The Perfect Storm* lacked in excellent, tight, compelling narrative.

I dont normally go for historical accounts, but this is basically a thrilling adventure story which just happens to be entirely historically accurate. You will be transported back in time, and feel the desperate struggle of the men to survive as though you were there. You will feel the wonder and horror of the arctic environment in ways that you probably cant imagine right now. The account does not feel in any way dated -- you feel as though you understand what it was like to be on an icebreaker heading to the pole during this time period. I have trouble imagining anyone not liking it. I have read hundreds or thousands of adult books and this is one of my very highest recommendations. Certainly anyone that loves: (1) adventure; (2) historical books; (3) books about the natural world will love it -- but honestly, you only need one of the three, and if (2) and (3) dont interest you, you'll likely still love it. It works incredibly well just as an adventure. It does start a little slow, with some modest number of pages on setting up the voyage and the initial "smooth sailing" portion of the voyage. This was enough to, at least for now, derail my wife, but this portion is not that long, and you can always skim it. Please note that the one negative review on appears to be talking about the costs-money paperback edition for sale reached from the same page as the free ebook. As such, the complaints that reviewer makes are legitimate and his review should actually not be rated unhelpful as many have done. The review does not, however, relate to the free ebook.

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