

Shackleton's Endurance: An Antarctic Survival Story

Joanna Grochowicz

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Joanna Grochowicz's fictionalization of the true story of the *Endurance*, which sailed to the Antarctic in 1914, concerns the commitment and perseverance of a leader and his crew.

In hopes of inspiring the British population during World War I, Ernest Shackleton and his men set off on an expedition to Antarctica. Plagued by worries about the war effort back home, they faced hypothermia, hazardous iceberg trappings, and starvation. After the *Endurance* was encased by ice, the crew was forced to abandon ship. Their hardships increased, as they were unable to communicate with the mainland; their unease with each other was amplified by their inner insecurities.

Among those trapped are Blackborow, a stowaway whose initial innocence and gung-ho attitude are a point of focus; having been thrust into a dangerous situation, he soon realizes that he's in over his head. And Worsley, the captain of the *Endurance*, is Shackleton's loyal right-hand man; he looks out for the other men and instills discipline, even during tough circumstances. Shackleton himself is an inspiration to the crew in his determination to survive. Though their struggle for survival becomes repetitive, the book captures the imagination throughout, conveying the beautiful, harsh environment of the Antarctic Sea.

Indeed, the Antarctic setting is evoked with palpable imagery, as of "secluded coastal spots" where "seals frolic and glaciers crumble into the sea like brittle white candy." Charming illustrations supply additional visualizations. Flashbacks to Shackleton's formative years and past expeditions hang over the crew's heads: his past explorations to Antarctica ended in disaster, with few crewmates returning.

In *Shackleton's Endurance*, a leader's persistence steers an uneasy crew toward salvation from a war, the icy wild, and themselves.

ALI ORTIZ (September / October 2021)

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