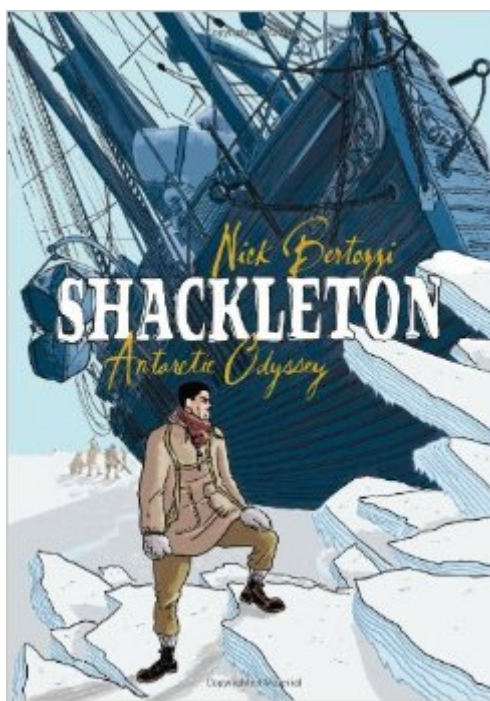


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Shackleton: Antarctic Odyssey



Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Ernest Shackleton was one of the last great Antarctic explorers, and he led one of the most ambitious Antarctic expeditions ever undertaken. This is his story, and the story of the dozens of men who threw in their lot with him - many of whom nearly died in the unimaginably harsh conditions of the journey. It's an astonishing feat - and was unprecedented at the time - that all the men in the expedition survived. Shackleton's expedition marked the end of a period of romantic exploration of the Arctic and the Antarctic, and this is as much a book about the encroaching modern world as it is about travel. But Nick Bertozzi has documented this remarkable journey with such wit and fiendish attention to detail that it's impossible not to get caught up in the drama of the voyage. Shackleton is a phenomenal accompaniment to Bertozzi's earlier graphic novel about great explorers, Lewis & Clark.

Book Information

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Paperback: 128 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (15 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

I have been reading about polar explorations for over 20 years now and come to this very well versed in Shackleton and the Endurance expedition. I'm not sure what I expected from this, but I am increasingly enamored of :01 as a publishing house and thought that, at the least, this would be fun. (I have not yet read Bertozzi's previous book on the Lewis and Clark expedition.)I confess to being

amazed here. Not so much by the art work, though the minimalist b&w suits the story very well, nor so much by the breadth and scope - this is very to the point; there is very little background or biography of any of the principals, including Sir Ernest. No, what amazes me is Bertozzi's ability to humanize the expedition, to turn these historical figures into people, and to do so with the simplest of touches. Rather than spend a great deal of space and ink on the "heroic" nature of the ordeal, he focuses on the personal and the mundane. Rather than paint in larger than life strokes, he presents us with a series of miniatures that illuminate these men and what their lives on the ice were like. Example: rather than provide a "tour" of the Endurance and provide "specs", Bertozzi uses an escaped sled dog's romp through the under-decks and a cutaway of the ship. We get the same information and sense of scale, but in a novel way that lets us relate to these men AS men. In this case, annoyed men trying to corral a runaway dog. It is touches like this that make this thin graphic work a valuable addition to polar literature. These touches do not in any way diminish the ordeal that Shackleton and his men went through. On the contrary, it rather ennobles them. They quickly become real to us.

One of the most amazing things about the explosion of graphic novels in the current era is how many great non-fiction comics have come out. One might argue whether or not book publishers are too focused on "graphic memoir" these days, but if I can read more stories like this bizarre true-life story of Ernest Shackleton, Antarctic explorer, I don't mind. The early 1900s was the "heroic age of Antarctic Exploration", where daring men struggled to find out more about the ice-bound seventh continent. Shackleton's third try involved a plan to walk across Antarctica, coast to coast via the south pole. Nick Bertozzi presents all this in honest detail, but he doesn't skimp on the dry humor. The first, failed expedition is summed up in three panels, with tiny figures engaging in this exchange: "We all have scurvy, we should turn back." "But we're only 460 miles way from the Pole!" "I'd rather live." His use of white space is also amazing. When he uses the little people in wide panels, the scale reminds us of what a sparse, desolate environment they're exploring. The panels without borders similarly open up the pages. He combines maps, diagrams, and more traditional comic storytelling, using whichever techniques better convey the information coherently and effectively. It's difficult to keep all the men straight, with so many of similar looks and character, but I do adore that he drew all the little dog heads, since they were such an important part of the mission (although it did not end well for them). Bertozzi's use of detail throughout the book brings home the difficulty (and somewhat foolhardiness) and danger of this expedition, making it both real to the reader and entertaining.

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