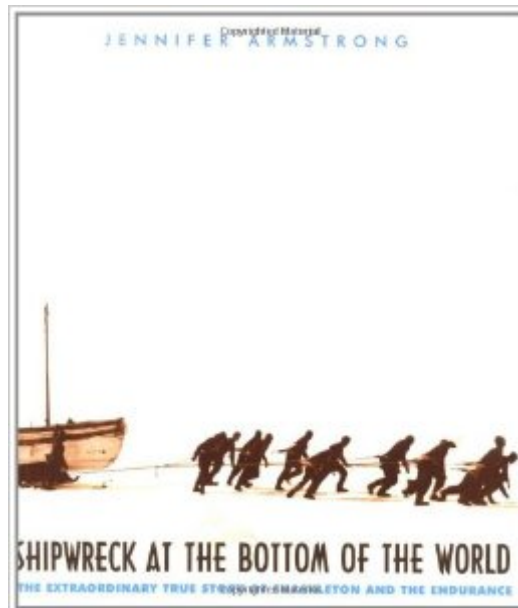


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# Shipwreck At The Bottom Of The World: The Extraordinary True Story Of Shackleton And The Endurance



## Synopsis

The harrowing story of the ill-fated Endurance, now in paperback. In August 1914, Ernest Shackleton and 27 men sailed from England in an attempt to become the first team of explorers to cross Antarctica from one side to the other. Five months later and still 100 miles from land, their ship, Endurance, became trapped in ice. The expedition survived another five months camping on ice floes, followed by a perilous journey through stormy seas to remote and unvisited Elephant Island. In a dramatic climax to this amazing survival story, Shackleton and five others navigated 800 miles of treacherous open ocean in a 20-foot boat to fetch a rescue ship. *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World* vividly re-creates one of the most extraordinary adventure stories in history. Jennifer Armstrong narrates this unbelievable story with vigor, an eye for detail, and an appreciation of the marvelous leadership of Shackleton, who brought home every one of his men alive.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1090 (What's this?)

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Knopf Books for Young Readers; 1st Pbk. Ed edition (September 12, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375810498

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Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.4 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (58 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #49,116 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Exploration & Discovery](#) #74 in [Books > History > World > Expeditions & Discoveries](#) #14840 in [Books > Reference](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

There was a spate of Shackleton books, documentaries, and films not too long ago following the events of September 11, 2001. During that time, people couldn't get enough of the story of a man facing ridiculously insurmountable odds to save his men and return home from the Antarctic. Preceding this surge in Shackleton love, this book appeared in 1998 and tells the story perfectly. I must admit that I fell in love with this book. Armstrong is a master here, breaking the monotony of

the months the men spent waiting for the *Endurance* to be free from the ice flows by telling about the crew's practical jokes and games. The author is careful to include photographs only as they occur in the text. At the beginning of the trip, the ship's photographer takes a great many shots of life with the crew. Towards the end, photos are few and far between. In some books for children, this might be a huge drawback. Here, it works exceedingly well. The text grows more and more interesting as the photos diminish. I believe that if the author did not say right from the beginning that Shackleton and every single member of this crew survived, this book might be impossible to continue reading. The notes in the back are of some help, and the photos of the crew members are useful. What makes this book stand out is that it captures a group of people doing work that they are exceedingly good at. It is very satisfying to read about accomplished individuals. This book might or might not read well to children. I don't know how well it would do. Still, I would recommend it to anyone and pair it with books of fiction and non-fiction that deal with the Antarctic or exploration. The fact that this book wasn't given so much as a Newberry honor is an appalling fact.

The tale of Ernest Shackleton and crew and their ill-fated South Pole expedition is an incredible one indeed. This version of that journey is spell-binding and certainly piques interest and anticipation. While Armstrong's *"Shipwreck..."* is basically an older children's book, it is great for adults as well. [Reviewer's note: The book *"Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage"* by Alfred Lansing provides a much more detailed version of this journey.] The photographs are bountiful and certainly contribute to the eerie realism of the challenges faced by this crew, vividly relaying the desperation of their predicament. I was disturbed, however, by the author's commentary in one of the photo captions (see page 38 of the September 2000 paperback edition) where she takes extreme journalistic liberty regarding the early-century comedy practice, "blackface". Armstrong's thinly-veiled 'mini' "civil rights" commentary there is totally unnecessary and unprofessional. Her assertion does, however, illustrate the ease at which historical revisionism exerts itself. Such journalistic hubris reminds me of what Wrangler (Jean Company) did a few years ago in a sales advertisement when they air-brushed the cigarettes from the mouths of cowboys in a well-known, c. 1800's historical portrait. While it benefited them (Wrangler) to use the rugged "realism" of these cowboys, the "realism" of the current times (ie., anti-smoking) was not allowed---selective "truth", if you will (a Stalinesque technique). Only the politically correct version of history allowed here!

The book *Shipwreck at the bottom of the world* is a very good book because it tells about the hardships Ernest Shackleton and his crew had to go through. This book tells their story in vivid

detail and is very well written. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes adventure and travel.

This 1999 winner of the Orbis Pictus Award (given for outstanding nonfiction for children) is a detailed and well-researched account of Sir Ernest Shackleton's incredible 1914-1916 voyage to Antarctica. Jennifer Armstrong does an excellent job of creating interest all through the book, sharing interesting details about what the men ate, and the games and activities they used to pass the time. The book includes many photographs taken by the photographer on the expedition, giving a sense of realism and immediacy. The author follows Shackleton's trip from England to South Georgia Island, then the failed attempt to get to the Antarctic continent. The ship becomes stuck in ice, but the ice migrates, moving the *Endurance* further north, toward the open ocean. Before they reach the sea the ice crushes the ship, forcing the men to abandon it. It is after the sinking of the *Endurance* that the narrative gets so exciting that the book is impossible to put down. The reader reads with growing horror of the crew's travail across the ice and out to tiny, barren Elephant Island. When it seems that the men can't possibly have anything worse ahead of them, Shackleton and five men sail a small lifeboat eight hundred miles back to South Georgia Island. Armstrong's description of the harrowing fifteen days spent in the lifeboat holds the reader in a vise-like grip. She winds down the tension with a very satisfying epilogue relating what the crewmembers did with the rest of their lives. The captioned photograph at the end of the book showing the entire crew shortly after their return to civilization is a perfect touch.

I cannot tell you how fascinating this book was to me. I don't think I have ever read a book so fast. Very good I encourage anyone to read it.

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Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the *Endurance* National Geographic. October 2009. Vol. 216 No. 4. The Tallest Trees. Redwoods. Plus Whales; Indonesia; Sahara; Shipwreck. (Rocketing Whales; Indonesia Faces the Fanatics; Lost in the Sahara; A Priceless Shipwreck., 216) The *Endurance*: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition *Endurance*: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage *Deep Survival*: True Stories of Miraculous *Endurance* and Sudden Death *The Last Voyage of Columbus*: Being the Epic Tale of the Great Captain's Fourth Expedition, Including Accounts of Mutiny, Shipwreck, and Discovery *The Last Voyage of Columbus*: Being the Epic Tale of the Great Captain's Fourth Expedition, Including Accounts of Swordfight, Mutiny, Shipwreck, Gold, War, Hurricane, and Discovery *Just Shipwreck*

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