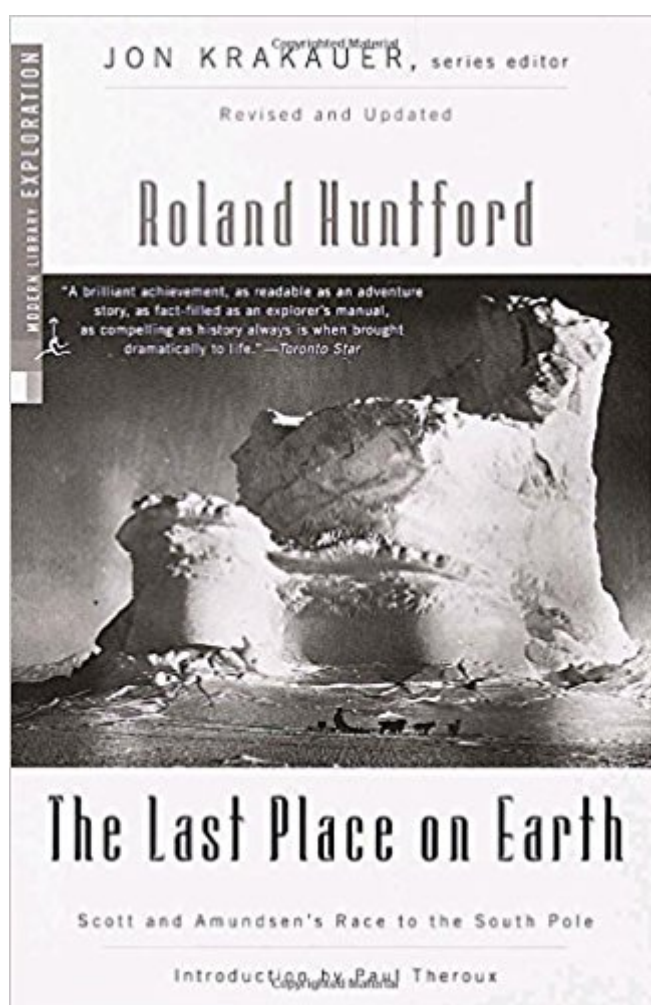


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The Last Place On Earth: Scott And Amundsen's Race To The South Pole, Revised And Updated (Modern Library Exploration)



Synopsis

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the South Pole was the most coveted prize in the fiercely nationalistic modern age of exploration. In the brilliant dual biography, the award-winning writer Roland Huntford re-examines every detail of the great race to the South Pole between Britain's Robert Scott and Norway's Roald Amundsen. Scott, who dies along with four of his men only eleven miles from his next cache of supplies, became Britain's beloved failure, while Amundsen, who not only beat Scott to the Pole but returned alive, was largely forgotten. This account of their race is a gripping, highly readable history that captures the driving ambitions of the era and the complex, often deeply flawed men who were charged with carrying them out. *THE LAST PLACE ON EARTH* is the first of Huntford's masterly trilogy of polar biographies. It is also the only work on the subject in the English language based on the original Norwegian sources, to which Huntford returned to revise and update this edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On December 14, 1911, the classical age of polar exploration ended when Norway's Roald Amundsen conquered the South Pole. His competitor for the prize, Britain's Robert Scott, arrived one month later--but died on the return with four of his men only 11 miles from their next cache of supplies. But it was Scott, ironically, who became the legend, Britain's heroic failure, "a monument to sheer ambition and bull-headed persistence. His achievement was to perpetuate the romantic myth of the explorer as martyr, and ... to glorify suffering and self-sacrifice as ends in themselves."

The world promptly forgot about Amundsen. Biographer Ronald Huntford's attempt to restore Amundsen to glory, first published in 1979 under the title *Scott and Amundsen*, has been thawed as part of the Modern Library Exploration series, captained by Jon Krakauer (of

Huntford's chronicle of the rivalry between the United Kingdom's Robert Scott and Norway's Roald Amundsen to become the first explorer to reach the South Pole, poses a substantial challenge for adaptation into the audio format. The narrative presents events in a third-person expository fashion, offering precious few opportunities for dialogue among the real-life characters. American listeners may consider Tim Pigott-Smith's British accent distracting, while others might enjoy it as a relevant bit of flair. The story contains plenty of inherent drama, but the abridgment seems to veer off course in the concluding sections, as the long-term legacies of the two polar pioneers is rather rushed. A Modern Library paperback. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I watched the seven-part BBC series called "The Last Place on Earth" before reading this book. Huntford takes you from the beginning of polar exploration to the extraordinary feat of Roald Amundsen and his team and the aftermath. The Norwegians were first to reach the South Pole, but the British were hailed as heroes (having died in their attempt). Using primary sources, the author painstakingly builds a case for incredible incompetence of the British Scott and contrasts it to the profoundly capable Amundsen. This is an excellent account of remarkable men and the times in which they lived.

Two expeditions, so alike in their ostensible goals, so different in their approaches to the challenge. I have often recommended this book, and even given it as a present, to business colleagues. Indeed, I know of very few, if any, managerial texts that so vividly elucidate the pros and cons of the leadership styles and organizational cultures described herein. On the one hand, there is Captain Scott's expedition, the epitome of the well-financed corporate establishment undertaking. Change the names and the specific environment and this could be any of the many major corporations with whom I have worked and interacted. On the other hand, there is Captain Amundsen's enterprise, the epitome of the lean, entrepreneurial entity; focused on proven talent, world-class experience, and true excellence; not the appearance, not the show, not the facade of talent, but the rare real thing itself. Of course, the result was a foregone conclusion (which for those of you who do not yet know the story, I will not reveal here). This book is **MUST** read for everyone!

Meticulously researched book on polar explorers Englishman Robert Scott and his Norwegian rival Roald Amundsen. For history buffs it is a treasure trove of insights about the European world in the very early 20th Century. For contemporary readers, the contrast between the two men highlight the personal traits that lead to significant success or total disaster in any era. Readers of course know that the two explorers were competing to be the first to reach the south pole. Both parties had to cover roughly 1500 miles "on foot" from their base camps. Amundsen reached the pole five weeks ahead of Scott. The Norwegian party reached the pole with relatively little difficulty, and returned to base without significant difficulties. The English party suffered great difficulties on the trip to the pole and then the explorers who did reach the pole perished on the return trip. The legend of Scott as the brave Englishman who perished while fighting impossible odds was a tale told to generations of English school children. This book blows that myth to pieces as Scott is shown to be a self promoting careerist who saw the polar expedition as a path to promotion in the British Navy. He never bothered with proper preparations, was a miserable leader, made an endless number of inexplicably stupid decisions, and never bothered to learn anything from other more expert polar explorers. Amundsen by contrast spent nearly five years in preparation for the trip to the pole. He hand picked a crew of seasoned arctic explorers and organized his expedition with meticulous care. He was a solid leader, excellent organizer and highly experienced in arctic exploration. In the end, he succeeded where Scott failed completely. However many people at the time discounted his achievement because it looked almost too easy. Even though readers know the outcome of the race to the pole when they begin reading page 1, the contrast between the two expeditions is so compelling a story that this book is a genuine "page turner". It is the kind of story that has many lessons to teach, This is a book that would be a good one for business students, or managers of almost any enterprise. It highlights the way to almost guarantee failure (Scott) as contrasted with the things necessary to give yourself a chance at success.

In high school we were told to have a dictionary by our books when we read them but I've only ever done that once in my life, for Roland Huntford's *The Last Place on Earth*, which is so fantastically well written that if I ever didn't understand something I felt I was missing out. The book gives a realistic telling of the South Pole story, focusing more on Scott than Amundsen, but more complimentary of Amundsen. The book's thesis is that preparation was what made Amundsen more successful, and it's convincing without feeling biased. It described Scott's party as being heroic but not having open minds and as a result unnecessarily ill-prepared for such a dangerous expedition.

It's a message that's well told and stays with you.

Nice and compelling story. Kept me hooked from the very first page. Initial perception of these events hardly make justice to the real thing. I highly recommend this book to those interested in understanding not only what happened (piece of mankind history) but people personalities at the time and driving forces in the game. Very detailed work. Looking for some other books of the same author.

Absolutely amazing! Must read! I am not a history book reader. But this is just outstanding and very well written. This also gives great insight into management of projects and how everyone should prepare... PLAN FOR THE WORST!

A fascinating telling of the story of the Scott and Amundsen race to the South Pole. My husband and I are about to read the Ranulph. Fiennes book, SCOTT, that reportedly portrays Scott more favorably than he was portrayed in this in depth and compelling account of the two explorers and their preparations and trek to the pole. I highly recommend THE LAST PLACE ON EARTH as a fine read and a fascinating story..

Great read! So much information, but very easy to follow and understand! I have told all my friends to get this one!

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