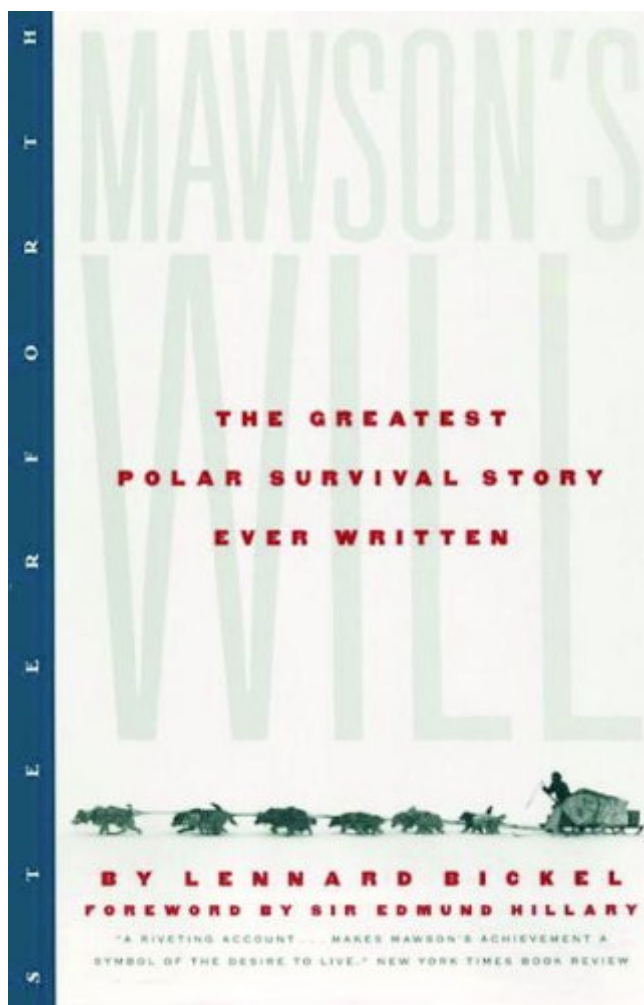


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Mawson's Will: The Greatest Polar Survival Story Ever Written



Synopsis

Mawson's Will is the dramatic story of what Sir Edmund Hillary calls "the most outstanding solo journey ever recorded in Antarctic history." For weeks in Antarctica, Douglas Mawson faced some of the most daunting conditions ever known to man: blistering wind, snow, and cold; loss of his companion, his dogs and supplies, the skin on his hands and the soles of his feet; thirst, starvation, disease, snowblindness - and he survived. Sir Douglas Mawson is remembered as the young Australian who would not go to the South Pole with Robert Scott in 1911, choosing instead to lead his own expedition on the less glamorous mission of charting nearly 1,500 miles of Antarctic coastline and claiming its resources for the British Crown. His party of three set out through the mountains across glaciers in 60-mile-per-hour winds. Six weeks and 320 miles out, one man fell into a crevasse, along with the tent, most of the equipment, all of the dogs' food, and all except a week's supply of the men's provisions. Mawson's Will is the unforgettable story of one man's ingenious practicality and unbreakable spirit and how he continued his meticulous scientific observations even in the face of death. When the expedition was over, Mawson had added more territory to the Antarctic map than anyone else of his time. Thanks to Bickel's moving account, Mawson can be remembered for the vision and dedication that make him one of the world's great explorers. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rarely has fiction served the truth so well. Rarely has the truth served fiction so well. Mawson's own account of his ordeal, in "The Home of The Blizzard", seems relatively matter of fact. We may not have marvelled at Mawson's accomplishment in surviving if we relied only on his way of telling it. Although a good writer, his specialities were geography and exploration. Bickel's presentation here in "Mawson's Will" makes Mawson's accomplishment more touching than Mawson's own presentation. But it took an extraordinary writing accomplishment by Bickel to convey Mawson's accomplishment. Poetic license? To fail to understand how much faithful art it took to go from Mawson's diaries and book to Bickel's account would be to not appreciate how much effort and skill it took for Bickel to bring Mawson's tale so fully alive. If Bickel hadn't taken poetic license, this tale may have been of more interest to the most purist historian but it would have been of far less human interest. Sensitive to our lack of understanding of the Antarctic experience, Bickel put us there in a way we never could have gotten from Mawson's own account. The last one hundred pages of "Mawson's Will" are as riveting as anything I've read in years. Bickel's faithfulness to Mawson has made this a special work of art. Because of Bickel, we can be amazed at how Mawson survived and understand something profound about the human will. P.S. I wake up the next day to find the story is still strong on my mind. Mawson returned to Australia to find his beloved waiting, married her, in time actually returned to the Antarctic for exploration, and lived til 73.

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