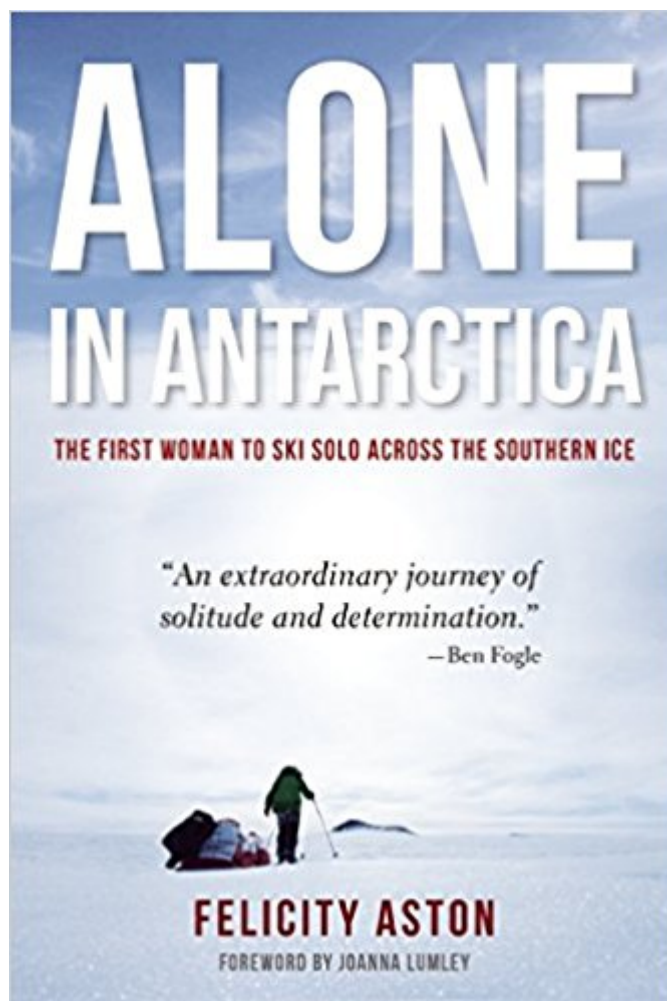


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# Alone In Antarctica



## Synopsis

In the whirling noise of our advancing technological age, we are seemingly never alone, never out-of-touch with the barrage of electronic data and information. Felicity Aston, physicist and meteorologist, took two months off from all human contact as she became the first woman -- and only the third person in history -- to ski across the entire continent of Antarctica alone. She did it, too, with the simple apparatus of cross-country, without the aids used by her predecessors -- two Norwegian men -- each of whom employed either parasails or kites. Aston's journey across the ice at the bottom of the world asked of her the extremes in terms of mental and physical bravery, as she faced the risks of unseen cracks buried in the snow so large they might engulf her and hypothermia due to brutalizing weather. She had to deal, too, with her emotional vulnerability in face of the constant bombardment of hallucinations brought on by the vast sea of whiteness, the lack of stimulation to her senses as she faced what is tantamount to a form of solitary confinement. Like Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*, Felicity Aston's *Alone in Antarctica* becomes an inspirational saga of one woman's battle through fear and loneliness as she honestly confronts both the physical challenges of her adventure, as well as her own human vulnerabilities.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A quick-reading account of a spectacular and appalling journey." --Kirkus "Aston's memoir gives the reader a good sense of her isolation, her determination, and her fragility." --Aston doesn't overdramatize her adventure - she favors straightforward descriptions over breathless prose

- but she still pulls us in and makes us feel as though we are with her, at the freezing-cold bottom of the world." &#151;Booklist"Felicity Aston ventures into even more extreme climes when she sets out to become the first woman to ski solo across Antarctica. Her memoir, *Alone in Antarctica*, brings to life the terror, the wonder, and the craziness of her two-month ordeal." &#151;National Geographic, Best New Travel Read of Fall 2014"An extraordinary journey of solitude and determination"&#151;Ben Fogle, author of *The Teatime Islands*, *Offshore*, *Crossing*, and *The Race to the Pole*."Felicity's dynamic and inspiring storytelling links us all to our own crossing, helping us all push beyond our fears to reach our goals. Her descriptions of the ice and her honesty of the feelings it brings forth, stir our love for that magnificent place and the lifestyle of the challenge - we want to return!"&#151;Ann Bancroft and Liv Arnesen, polar explorers"Felicity's gripping adventure captures the thrill and fear of Antarctic exploration"&#151;Ranulph Fiennes, author of *Killer Elite*, and *My Heroes*"Her achievement is remarkable"&#151;The Daily Mail"Admirable, emotional and enchanting... a must-read"&#151;WanderlustInterview with NPR's Morning Edition:Now this week, we got a message through to Antarctica. We got on the phone once again with Felicity Aston. She recently became the first woman to ski solo across Antarctica from one coast to another. It took her 59 days to cover more than 1,000 miles, dragging her supplies behind her on sleds. Yesterday, she was at the Union Glacier base camp on the Antarctic coast, waiting to catch a flight toward home.Well, congratulations on the journey.FELICITY ASTON: Thank you very much. Very kind.INSKEEP: We last spoke with you in December, we should remind people, when you were on your way; you were very, very close to the South Pole. How did things go after that?ASTON: Well, I arrived at the South Pole on the worst weather day of probably the entire trip.(SOUNDBITE OF LAUGHTER)ASTON: It's a big station at the South Pole, and yet I couldn't see it until I was maybe 100 yards away. But luckily, there were people there waiting for me and it was just wonderful to see some friendly faces. And I spent a day at the Pole and it was a day off from skiing. But I think more than that, it was a off from the stress of being totally responsible for yourself. You know, at the Pole, I knew I was safe.(SOUNDBITE OF LAUGHTER)ASTON: But then, of course, I had to leave the Pole and I had a deadline at the end of the Antarctic season when everyone goes home because the winter approaches. So I started doing some really big days. And when I got to my second to my last resupply, which is 500 kilometers further on, I realized I did have enough time to make it to the coast.It was, you know, really quite something to change my mindset from being thinking, oh, I'm just going to get out there and do my time every day and see how far I can get, to thinking, well, I did know if I've actually got a shot at this and I'm going to make it to the coast. And obviously seeing the coastal mountains, ah, that was a real moment. And...INSKEEP: Oh, I bet.ASTON: ...it was a

horrible day, couldn't see anything and then just suddenly it was like a biblical moment. Slowly, the clouds parted. The sun came out and seemed to shine right on me, these little fat triangles on the horizon. And then I just stopped on my tracks right where it was and burst into tears.(SOUNDBITE OF LAUGHTER)ASTON: 'Cause it was like seeing the finish line. It still took me another four days to actually reach the coast. But, you know, the first sight of those mountain really was the beginning of the end, and that was fantastic.INSKEEP: Oh, now that sounds beautiful. But when you talk about the storms and being in the situation where you couldn't even see the South Pole station until you were a hundred yards away, I'm thinking about airplanes that sometimes do instrument navigation. They can't see anything so they're relying entirely on instruments.Were you having to do instrument navigation as you walked?ASTON: Yeah, I mean I regularly referred to it 'cause I was flying on instruments today. There were days when I couldn't see the surface beneath my skis. You know, it was just all white so it was no surface texture at all. And I was following my compass, literally head down following that needle.INSKEEP: Do you feel like a strong desire to be around people, having been around nobody for so long?ASTON: It actually doesn't. The only thing I've noticed is I did have to remind myself last night, when I flew back into camp, you know, about the polite rules of society. Things like I can't just have a pee wherever I want anymore.(SOUNDBITE OF LAUGHTER)ASTON: I have to go into the appropriate place. And chatting to the sun isn't acceptable either.(SOUNDBITE OF LAUGHTER)ASTON: So I got to used to getting out of a tent in the morning and: Morning, sun, how are you? And: Nice to see you today. And things like that. And I've got to stop doing that, otherwise I'm going to sound like a mad woman.INSKEEP: Better to find a human being to direct those remarks to, I suppose.(SOUNDBITE OF LAUGHTER)ASTON: Yeah. Well, you know, I'm looking forward to getting home and sharing the experience with people. And I'm still finding it quite unbelievable that I skied across Antarctica. I was looking at a map this morning of Antarctica and where I started and where I finished and it just seems unbelievable that I skied all that way.INSKEEP: Felicity Aston became the first woman to ski solo across Antarctica.Congratulations, and thanks for taking the time.ASTON: Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.

Felicity Aston is the first and only woman in the world to ski alone across Antarctica. The 35-year-old British expedition leader, public speaker and freelance travel writer from Kent also led the 2009 Commonwealth Expedition to the South Pole, the first British women's team across Greenland; this became the subject of her first book, *Call of the White*, a finalist in the Banff Mountain Book Competition in 2011. *Outside Magazine* named her one of their 2012 Adventurers of the Year. Felicity lives in Birchington-on-Sea, Kent, in the UK.

I probably wouldn't have chosen this book to read if it had not been for book club. I found it to be fascinating and very educational. Having spent a lot of time alone in my life I could identify with some of her emotions, but she experienced it in extremes. I admire her preparedness and courage.

Great read, loved the personal way it was written and the psychological revelations of what she endured.

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