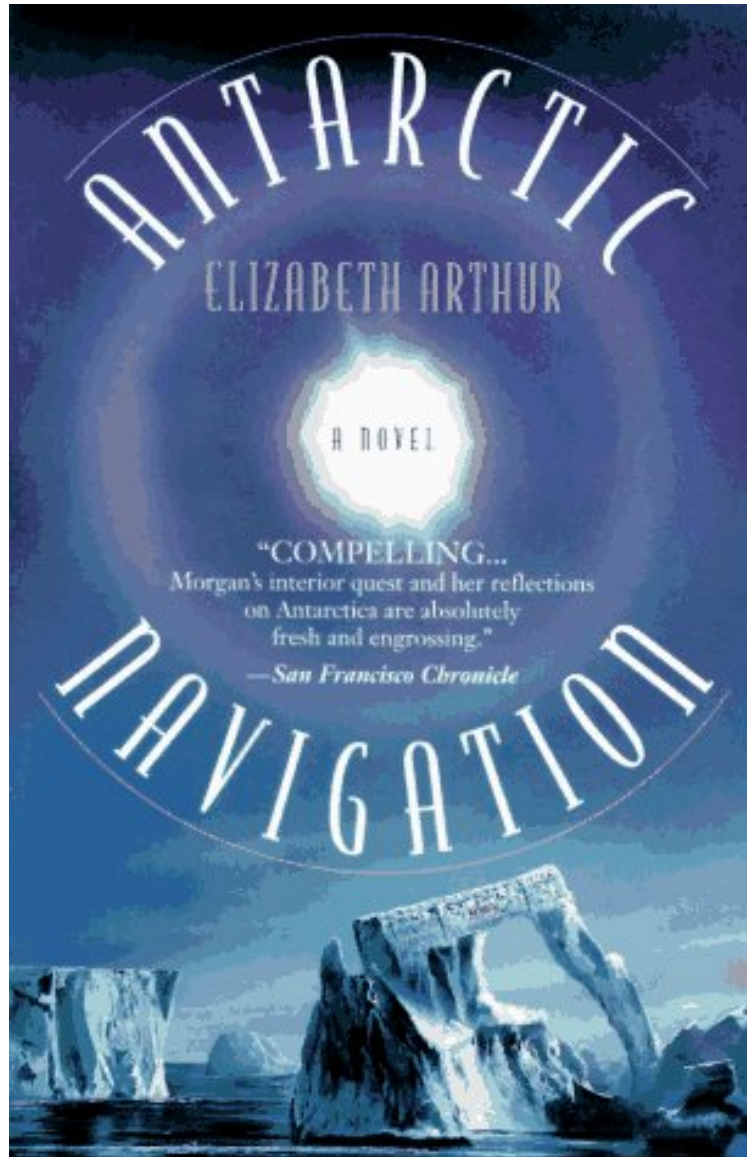


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Antarctic Navigation

Elizabeth Arthur

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Elizabeth Arthur : Antarctic Navigation before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Antarctic Navigation:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Long, lovely book. By anaid Beautiful writing, intriguing story, realistic depiction of Antarctic conditions (so much that you might forget this is a novel, not a travelogue) Having both read some original antarctic journals from the Scott expedition immediately before reading this, and having lived in

Alaska, I was impressed by the author's realistic depictions of conditions. But you need no interest in cold climes to enjoy her lyrical prose. Warning - it is a long book, so I don't think I'd recommend it to people who aren't fans of very long stories. I love a long read to really get into the characters and their lives so it was great in that regard for me. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Make a beeline for this book! By Christina McCann This is probably one of the best books I have ever read and I'm not that wild about the novel genre. The author has done an enormous amount of research and has somehow managed to weave her character's story into the tale of Robert F. Scott and tragic, his ill-fated bid for the South Pole. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. There's a Deep Ocean Under All That Ice By David Bricker I'll begin by commenting on the reviews of others. Perhaps due to generational perspective, it never occurred to me that this might be a "feminist" book. Yes, the leader of the expedition is a woman, but throughout the book's 750 pages, not a single reference is made to any desire on the part of Morgan (the main character) to "prove what women can do." Morgan is attracted to the idea of retracing Robert Falcon Scott's polar expedition, organizes her crew, gathers her resources and undertakes her journey without any feminist references. I don't know Elizabeth Arthur, but I suspect she went to Antarctica to research this book with the same self-assuredness that Morgan does--not to answer any silly questions about whether or not women can and should go to the pole. Feminist? I didn't get that. Perhaps this perspective reveals the innate prejudices of other reviewers? Rather than being "feminist," Antarctic Navigation is feminine--something I found to be matter-of-factly honest (given that the author is a woman). Overt feminism sometimes produces artificially androgynous characters. Morgan--how shall I put something so difficult to define?--thinks and acts "like a woman." Her male characters think and act "like men." This is one area where the writing shines. Arthur's characters are masses of pure human contradiction--combinations of strengths and abilities and flaws and weaknesses, capable of tremendous insights and dramatic failures of perspective. The easy route would have been to have Morgan review the qualifications of respondents to an advertisement for crew (that's how Shackleton did it in real life), make some selections and reveal the characters as the expedition begins. But ultimately, this book is only about an expedition to the South Pole on the surface; the larger narrative involves a convergence of people and how they haul the sledges of perspective, personal background, history, politics, self-doubt, guilt, environmental responsibility and human nature across a metaphorical desert of ice and magic. Antarctica is pure, white, unspoiled planet earth--dangerous, beautiful, transcendent, inspiring, unforgiving, the last unspoiled frontier. It is before this white curtain that Arthur's characters test and reveal themselves. Antarctic Navigation is a masterpiece of experiential writing. The physical descriptions of the ice and the optical phenomena it produces are vivid and plausible, but the inner experiences--moments of insight, runaway thoughts, spinning perspectives under pressure, guilt, joy, relief--are rendered as well with remarkable integrity and intimacy. So much of being human happens quietly and personally inside our heads. Elizabeth Arthur makes us privy to Morgan's innermost thoughts and feelings. This is bold writing. Arthur not only understands what it is to be a thinking, feeling human being mired in hope, contradiction, love, regret, and aspiration and driven by an innate need to find "the source," she relates this understanding with an understated honesty seldom encountered. If you're looking for a page-turner about an adventure on the polar ice, you may find Antarctic Navigation to be overwritten. The adventure story is certainly there in exquisite detail, but I don't believe Antarctic Navigation was ever intended to be a thriller. Like a good offshore sailing voyage, this book is best savored page by page. The end of the voyage must inevitably arrive, but whether the wind is calm or blowing a gale, whether the seas are flat or breaking over the bow, the story is in the day's journey. As in real life, attaining the destination is an anticlimax. This is no "quick fix" for readers who don't have time. Antarctic Navigation is literature--carefully thought out, thoroughly researched, exquisitely crafted, deeply layered and related with profound honesty. Those prepared to read deeply, slowly and reflectively will not be disappointed by Antarctic Navigation.

"ALL THE INGREDIENTS A READER COULD HOPE FOR: parallel historical and contemporary dramas, a contest between personal aspirations and the powers of nature, the testing of human relationships under extreme conditions, and a magnificent setting."--The Boston Globe "THIS NOVEL, LIKE SCOTT'S JOURNEY, IS BOLD IN CONCEPT . . . Morgan Lamont, the narrator of Elizabeth Arthur's novel, lies broken in the land of dreams. . . . Born on the fiftieth anniversary of Scott's death on his return trip from the South Pole in 1912, she begins her own sledding and man-hauling experiences at the age of five, when her Flexible Flyer slips away and she saves it in an act of youthful heroism. From then on, her life is drawn, almost magnetically, to the man and the last continent. . . . Arthur demonstrates great craftsmanship in planning and shaping her plot."--The New York Times Book Review "AS ELIZABETH ARTHUR CONVINCES US IN HER METICULOUSLY RESEARCHED, POWERFULLY DRAWN, AND DEEPLY FELT NOVEL, there are many beginnings and endings sealed within the polar ice . . . Antarctic Navigation is more than an adventure story recast in contemporary feminist terms. It is also a bumpy coming-of-age tale: an exploration of the unmapped terrain of the heart; a flirtation with the complexities of ecopolitics, pacifism, and New Age mysticism; a dip into history, memoir, and science, and Arthur's passionate love letter to the natural world."--Miami Herald "ONE ALMOST FEELS THAT THE AUTHOR WROTE IT UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SCOTT, that she so breathed in the necessary geographical, scientific, emotional, and spiritual aspects of that dreadful journey

as to transcend fiction and spin reality. . . .So convincing that for several chapters I was deluded into thinking she was telling her own story and that she had actually been to the pole."--Beryl Bainbridge New York Newsday

.com This compelling novel of one woman's personal history and her obsession with the South Pole is all-encompassing and so powerfully written it is almost literally impossible to put down.From Publishers WeeklyArthur's epic novel chronicles a modern-day woman whose disgust with society's plundering of the environment leads to her decision to recreate Robert Scott's failed Antarctic expedition of 1910. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThis massive tome of a novel follows Morgan Lamont's journey from childhood, when she first becomes fascinated with the ill-fated expedition to the South Pole by explorer Robert Falcon Scott, to the adult realization of her dream to make the same journey. Morgan's parents divorce when she is young, her father dies, and her stepfather is a cold authoritarian. Unhappy with her Ph.D. studies in history, she eventually reconnects with her paint baron grandfather, who finances the Antarctic trip. Exotic locale and a lot of interesting Antarctic detail make for a mildly entertaining story, but additional editing is definitely needed. The author's participation in the National Science Foundation's "Antarctic Artists and Writers Program" led to her writing this novel, and she seems to be trying to repay the experience in verbiage. For larger fiction collections. Ann H. Fisher, Radford P.L., Radford, Va. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.