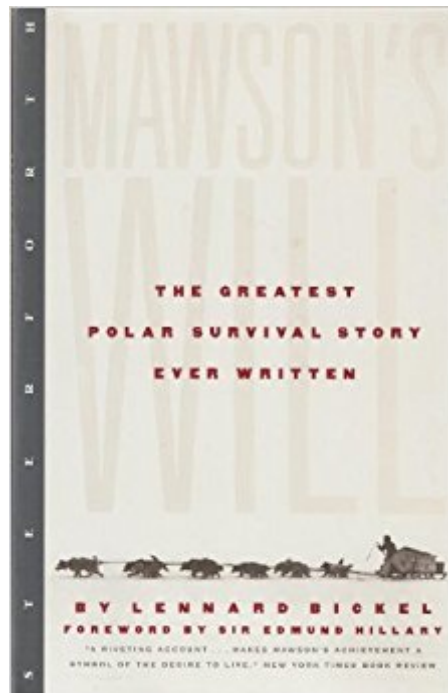




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Mawson's Will: The Greatest Polar Survival Story Ever Written



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.

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Customer Reviews

Named One of the Ten Best Books of Twentieth-Century Exploration
by The Explorer's Club "The most outstanding solo journey ever recorded in Antarctic history." -- Sir Edmund Hillary "A riveting account . . . makes Mawson's achievement a symbol of the desire to live." -- The New York

Times Book Review "A powerful reading experience." -- Publishers Weekly "Both grim and inspiring reading." -- The Wall Street Journal

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. "A riveting account . . . makes Mawson's achievement a symbol of the desire to live." -- "The New York Times Book Review "A powerful reading experience." -- "Publishers Weekly

I agree with the 5 star reviews concerning the quality of the book. However, as several other reviewers have pointed out, the text is badly corrupted. My guess is that the print edition was scanned and then software was used to convert it to a text file. However, no one seems to have proofread the conversion. So we find "Ms" for "his," "puke" for "pulse," "buzzard" for "blizzard," "jamng" for who knows what, and "h'tnb," probably for "limb." One passage comprising several lines is repeated a few lines later, making a hash of the paragraph. There are numerous extra commas and periods where they clearly don't belong (flyspecks on the page?). Hyphens frequently appear as em-dashes, making it unclear at first whether one is looking at a compound word or a parenthetical phrase. Perhaps most shamefully, photographs from the print edition are entirely omitted (as another reviewer has noted) from the Kindle edition. One would not know they exist, but for a reference in the Author's Note with which the book concludes, acknowledging "photographic material appearing in these pages." I don't know whether or the publisher is to blame, but it is

regrettable that these errors and omissions mar a fascinating and worthwhile book. Get the print edition instead.

This story is among the tales of the nearly unbelievable hardships endured by the explorers of Antarctica in the early years of the 20th century. Sir Douglas Mawson is less well known than several contemporaries (Amundsen, Scott, Shackleton), but the physical and mental challenges faced by him and the members of his expedition were no less daunting. Lennard Bickel has a writing style that tends toward hyperbole, and can be somewhat flowery in his descriptions. Overall, it is a good read, though terribly depressing to contemplate the fate of Mawson's two companions, as well as his own suffering. In the end, he made it; the others were not so fortunate. Now, the e-book edition. Awful. In the second half of the book I started to notice numerous typographical errors, including extra punctuation (such as multiple periods) as well as misspelled words. There were times when I had trouble deciphering the text at all, thinking perhaps I was looking at some Australian vernacular. I chatted with customer service. After 20 minutes, and transfers to 3 different agents, it was suggested that I delete the book, and download it again. I did that, but got the same poor product. Adding insult to injury, on my Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 7.0, using the Kindle App, I cannot see page numbers, only "time left to finish reading", some unknown digital place holder, or nothing at all. I intend to pursue this further, though I see that refunds of digital editions are only available for 7 days after purchase. If this were a hard copy, I would send it back.

This is a terrific, harrowing, fascinating and true story that happened barely 100 years ago. I highly recommend it. I'm just not sure that I recommend the Kindle version, because that last 20-25% of the book was FILLED with random and incorrectly placed punctuation, misspelled words and typos. It was so bad that just as you found yourself wanting to read faster, you had to slow down and re-read sentences to make heads or tails of where they were actually supposed to end, and what words were actually intended. It was distracting and a great disappointment... it was almost the literary equivalent to the trials and tribulations Mawson himself faced in his attempt to get back to his party... but not quite. Read the book, by all means, but somebody PLEASE figure out what the hell is wrong with this Kindle edition and fix it.

This is an amazing true story, very well-written and researched. I am writing this review to complain about the Kindle version. They must have used some very poor OCR technology to convert a printed copy into an electronic version. It baffles me that a publisher would convert their own book in

this manner. And then no one bothered proofread it and fix the glaring mistakes. Seriously? I'm used to reading old public-domain books that have been generated this way. So I'm used to reading over these kinds of mistakes without too much trouble. But when I pay for a new book, I expect better. Sometimes it was so bad I couldn't figure out what was meant. Thank you to the other reviewer for letting me know that "puke" was supposed to be "pulse."

Douglas Mawson's name has been mostly lost to most of us as the larger-than-life polar explorers like Amundsen and Shackleton and Scott have always been more famous. But Mawson's SOLO survival story is better than all theirs put together. I first was made aware of this book via a "New York Times" interview with Chelsea Handler, of all people, and she said it was one of the best books she'd ever read in her life and that it terrified her. I was truly intrigued, bought the book on her recommendation, and had the exact same visceral reaction to it. Mawson was an Australian polar explorer who was originally asked to go on Robert Falcon Scott's fatal expedition, but Mawson had different research objectives and so raised money for his own trip. One by one, his men died. One by one, his dogs died. He survived on willpower alone and it is a fascinating and powerful story. He lived into his late 70s after having survived a trip that would have felled every strong person you can imagine. Just fascinating, both as a story of polar exploration and as a tale of the strength of the human will to survive.

I've read so many human survival stories--especially in the accident-prone arctic :) This epic experience did not disappoint. It was very fascinating.

I read lots of survival stories and find it remarkable that this author could make this one into a story so dull I could barely make myself finish it. Also, the lack of editing was distracting. It's full of typos, incorrect punctuation, etc.

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