



Riding the Ice Wind: By Kite and Sledge across Antarctica

Alastair Vere Nicoll

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I was desperate to haul myself out of the rut and put my face to the wind, to lose myself in endeavour. And in the cold, the snow and the silence of a great immensity to shrug off the restlessness I felt.'

Adrift in a life without risk or surprise and with a burning desire to make some sense of his place in the world, Alastair Vere Nicoll dived into the unknown. Leaving the security of friends, work and a wife, he joined a team of young men to harness the katabatic winds and haul and kite-surf across Antarctica: the coldest, windiest, most violent continent on earth. For Alastair, as for so many men, Antarctica was a land of legend and mystery, the ultimate test of strength, endurance and bravery; a place where he might feed his restlessness and assuage his craving to find meaning in the emptiness. Not since Shackleton had nearly perished attempting the same thing in his Endurance expedition had such a crossing been attempted. This is the story, not only of the first West to East traverse of the continent of Antarctica, but of the crossing of two phases in the author's life - of youth into manhood, frivolity into responsibility, fantasy into reality. It is also the story of a race against time, as he fought to get home for the birth of his first child.

As Alastair battled through the freezing wastes, exploring the earth's wildest continent and his deepest self, he was haunted by the ghosts of past explorers and by the question of what it is to be a 'modern man' - is it possible to be a responsible husband and father as well as an adventurous soul? Told with searing honesty, quiet wisdom and adorned with some bewitching descriptions of Antarctica, *Riding the Ice Wind* is a compelling and important book for our times, a tale that will resonate deeply with anyone crossing similar bridges in their own lives.

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