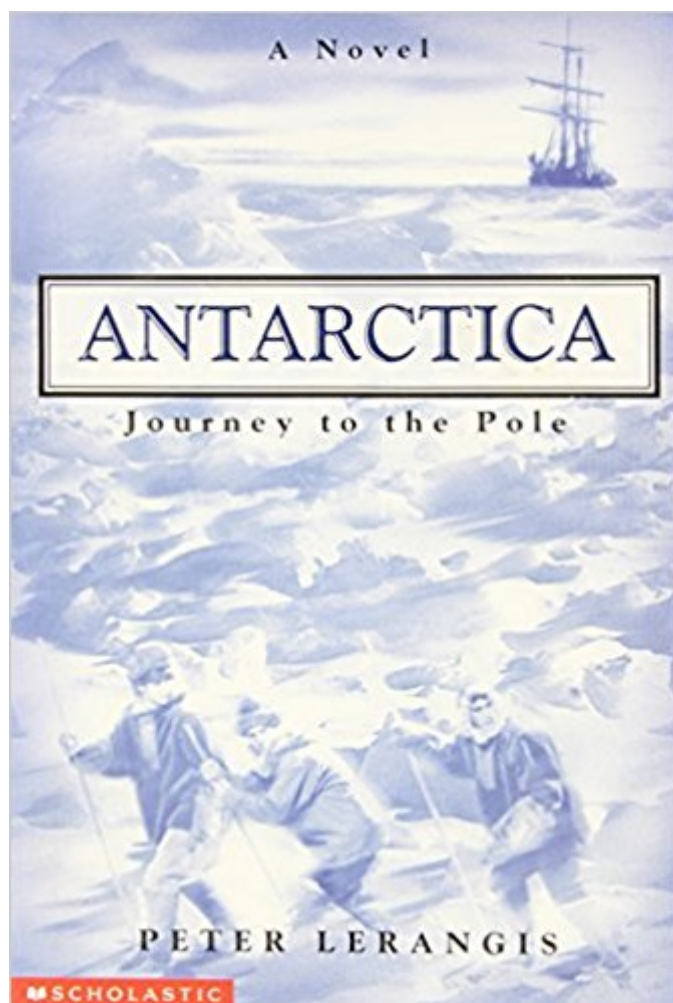


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# Antarctica: Journey To The Pole (Antarctica (Scholastic))



## Synopsis

The year is 1909. A motley crew of explorers and vagabonds sets sail for Antarctica aboard the *Mystery*. The voyage south is long and hard, and tensions between the crew members are severe. Breaking new ground, they set out to conquer the great South Pole. But they do not make it all the way. Instead, they must retreat for their lives. And so begins a year-long trek back to civilization, with every day bringing new risk and new adventure.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The call of Antarctica is loud and clear: Go away. You hear it in the groans of colliding ice floes. In the shriek of 200-mile-an-hour winds hurtling down the Transantarctic Mountains. In the thunder of an ice shelf splitting into the sea. In the hostile silence of a darkness that begins in April and ends in June." And yet, for polar explorers like Jack Winslow, the call is irresistible. Days after his beloved wife's death in May 1909, Jack, his son Colin, and his stepson Andrew, along with a motley crew of sailors, doctors, photographers, and scientists, set out on a journey to the bottom of the earth. During their harrowing expedition, they must confront many horrors in addition to their personal grieving and family disharmony: frostbite, killer whales, deadly ice floes, lack of food, negative-100-degree Fahrenheit temperatures, bottomless crevasses, a mutinous crew. Endurance, loyalty, and humanity are tested, and no man can be sure he'll emerge alive. Peter Lerangis's exciting novel is packed with thoroughly researched information on the Antarctic and turn-of-the-century ocean travel. While the character development is a little hard to follow--each

chapter is told from a different crew member's point of view--the story itself is thrilling. At the conclusion, the explorers (and readers) are left hanging from the proverbial cliff, as the ship becomes trapped between ice floes. (Ages 9 to 13) --Emilie Coulter

Lots of shivering, and not just from the cold, makes this good summer reading, especially on a hot day. -- Detroit Free Press, June 18, 2000  
Realistic ... compelling ... [you] see the scariness and excitement of the trip through the eyes of the boys in the story. -- Denver Post, July 18, 2000

I really love Peter Leranigs, but this was not my favorite book of his. However, I did like the book. It was good, just not great and that might have been because I had just finished reading an amazing book, so my expectations were high. It is a story of the race to the pole in the early 1900's. The main character, Cole, is a young boy whose father is obsessed with finding the pole. Cole's mother has died and his stepbrother Andrew is competition for the father's affection. Cole thinks he can reconnect with his father on the voyage to the pole, until he finds out that Andrew is going as well. The voyage is filled with disaster and misadventure, both natural and man-made. And, yet, it wasn't a knuckle-biter. Perhaps I've read too many of these types of stories. The descriptions of the adventure were really fascinating--to think what men endured, what they willingly volunteered for in order to conquer unknown lands. It's very clearly a clean adventure story with nothing in it remotely inappropriate. Just good, clean fun that has a touch more family drama than hair-raising adventure for this thrill seeker. The book did have great information on that period in history and really shows what it might have been like to travel to Antarctica back then. It's definitely a book for adolescents and has nothing in it to really interest adults. It's part of a series, but not one I will keep reading. It just didn't hold my attention enough to search out the others.

And also an awful lot of fun for this adult! Exactly the kind of story I loved as a child, and still love now - kids out in the adult-world braving themselves against nature and most importantly, against their own fears and insecurities. The story is, of course, exciting - a trip to Antarctica in 1909 when such trips were not so easy. The author's realistic use of marine language, situations, and technology of the time adds to the authenticity of the story. What I appreciate so much about it, and what always drew me in as a child to stories like these, is that the youth in the story are not just helpless ignorant children, nor are they brainy super-kids that never seem to be wrong. They are very real teens - struggling with who they are and with their family and who and what is their sense of authority. In the course of the story, they learn and grow. Yes, they end up sometimes saving the

day, but not in a trite way - when they save the day it is because they have grown past a fear, or grown into a sense of confidence in their own self, and taken a big psychological chance by expressing their authority, and that makes the situation real to the reader, and also shows the reader, especially the children readers for whom the book is intended, that what they are experiencing in their lives is real, and scary, and sometimes terrible, but that they can grow beyond it, and they can have hope that they will go beyond who they are now. Giving youth a sense of hope, and a sense that they are smart enough and good enough to make it in the world, and also showing them they will learn and grow into adulthood is so important, and books like this are great helpers. Although the book is written with a vocabulary and a sentence structure geared toward younger readers, the author does not "dumb down" to youth level, which is great. It's an awfully quick read for an adult, quicker even than Harry Potter prose, but for a youth, it's gotta be just about right - long enough to challenge, not so long that the child reader will get bogged down in detail and become completely lost in the narrative. I also appreciate the reality of it. Some reviewers have commented that it's maybe a little too realistic or grim or dark, but come on people - it's life. I'm glad my parents didn't feel the need to "protect" me, leaving me to grow into a functional adult human being. I'm glad Lerangis had the courage to include the scene of a man having his gangrenous feet axed off and of dogs dying in the cold, etc. Kids aren't stupid, and exposing them to real world issues isn't going to turn them into psychotics - it will turn them into normal adults who understand that a lot of stuff is dangerous, and who fear things realistically. Not that we need to add extra-realistic stuff to shock our kids, but we can't sugarcoat the world for them, either. People who are frostbit get their parts cut off. Dogs and people die in the cold. Ships get smashed by ice. People fall overboard. Sometimes people walk off into the snow, and are never seen again. Two last quick notes: I am glad that Lerangis popped in some Greek from the Greek character. Not in a way that the reader will have to know it to understand the story, but it adds a bit more realism, and I think showing the young English reader some foreign words is helpful to broaden their horizons. I am also glad that he included a few literature references - he mentions the teen characters reading Jack London and some other actually existing meat-world writings, which will hopefully drive the reader to the library or bookstore. What a great (perhaps sneaky?) way to expose young readers to our great literature. The teen characters are also shown reading other books in order to learn about Antarctica, how to navigate, and to learn other things they will need for the trip. Lerangis' last pages in the book are a rarity: a bibliography (in a child's book!) and a list of web-page resources about Antarctica and about the original adventurers who first set foot on it's icy fields of blowing death. A great book, certainly appropriate for younger readers. I'm very impressed, and will be passing this

on to my young relatives. (great job, Peter!)

Antarctica: Journey to the Pole (Antarctica (Scholastic)) I searched high and low for fiction about Antarctica and was quite excited when I found this, but this book just didn't cut it for me. I have laboured through it but I was looking for something for a reading group in my year 5 class that stimulated their imagination about Antarctica and really engaged them. Sadly this book did not meet the mark. I will not be using this novel as it is not written in a way that captures the audience. The author seems to get caught up in family politics which are not particularly engaging. All in all I am disappointed.

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