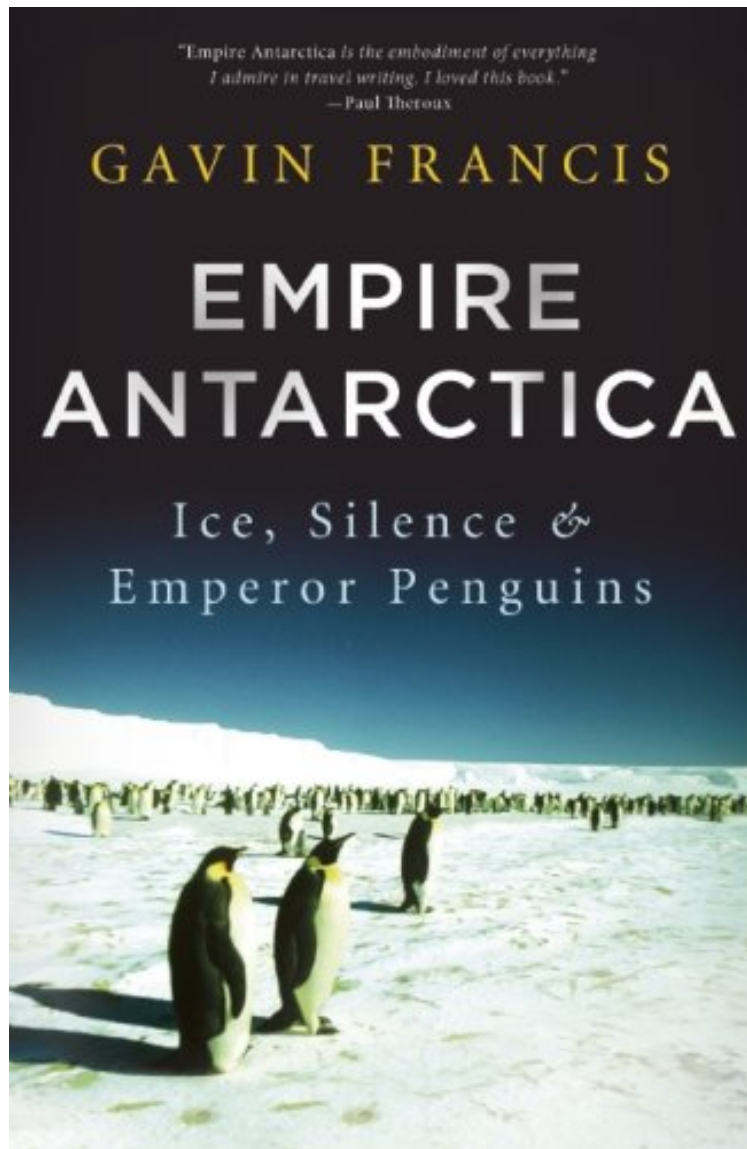


(Get free) Empire Antarctica: Ice, Silence and Emperor Penguins

Empire Antarctica: Ice, Silence and Emperor Penguins

Gavin Francis

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Gavin Francis : Empire Antarctica: Ice, Silence and Emperor Penguins before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empire Antarctica: Ice, Silence and Emperor Penguins:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful book!By Larry DennisThis beautifully written book is everything that a travel book should be. There is the personal experience of a long trip to Antarctica and wintering over with thirteen other people, each with his or her own strengths, weaknesses, and quirks, each battling emptiness differently. And there is nature - the ice, stars, and penguins. Reading this book I was frequently reminded of Arctic

Dreams by Barry Lopez. The descriptions of the adventures of famous polar explorers, of what they experienced - cold, dark, misery, and sometimes glory - are wonderful. This book has been shortlisted for the Book of the Year award in Scotland and deservedly so. I highly recommend it. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A reflection of life seen through the eyes of a penguin. By Simon Cook. I bought this book on the strength of a review from the Economist. The review didn't rave about the book but portrayed it as an interesting perspective of life by an intelligent author, clarified by the solitude of Antarctica and enhanced by the lives of the emperor penguins who kept the author company through the continent's long and dark winter. Various stories of the Antarctic are woven with the author's own experience in a way that breaks down the distinction between 'them' and 'us'. Somehow, the contrast of the author's matter-of-fact voice with the extraordinary experiences he describes brought the Antarctic to me. I have read various accounts of Amundsen, Scott and Shackleton but this was the first time I understood that these were, in reality, people who had an ordinary side to their lives from which the heroic came. I'd recommend the book to those who are interested. Antarctica is the scene, but life is the play. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you don't already know that it's cold and unpleasant in Antarctica, this may be of interest. Briefly. By Interested customer. If you wonder what it would be like to spend a lot of time in a horribly unpleasant place, where the reward for making a mistake, or even just being in the wrong place at the wrong time, is death, you may be mildly interested in this tale of the life--make that existence--of a "winterer" at a "camp" in the Antarctic. It's zero fun, shared by a strange bunch of other self-flagellators, none of whom really accomplishes much other than finding out that it can be really unpleasant to work and live in a cold and unpleasant place. But there are better written, and more interesting, books about challenges to Mother Nature. "Endurance" describes the horrors of a wooden ship being crushed in Antarctic ice, well before radio communication allowed its hapless crew to summon a helicopter for their rescue. "Undaunted Courage," the incredible tale of the Lewis and Clark expedition of over 7,000 miles from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia River and back, subsisting, for the most part, on what animals they could kill, or plants they could forage. Perhaps more interesting books because the adventurers had a purpose in mind other than making their own souls feel better. Momentarily.

Gavin Francis fulfilled a lifetime's ambition when he spent fourteen months as the basecamp doctor at Halley, a profoundly isolated British research station on the Caird Coast of Antarctica. So remote, it is said to be easier to evacuate a casualty from the International Space Station than it is to bring someone out of Halley in winter. Antarctica offered a year of unparalleled silence and solitude, with few distractions and very little human history, but also a rare opportunity. Throughout the year -- from a summer of perpetual sunshine to months of winter darkness -- Gavin Francis explores the world of great beauty conjured from the simplest of elements, the hardship of living at 50 C below zero and the unexpected comfort that this penguin community brings, for this is the story of one man and his fascination with the world's loneliest continent, as well as the emperor penguins who weather the winter with him. Combining an evocative narrative with a sublime sensitivity to the natural world, this is travel writing at its very best.

From Booklist * Starred * How would you like to spend a winter at Halley? This was the job offer that led medical doctor and author Francis (True North, 2010) to spend 14 months as the doctor at Halley, a British Antarctic Survey station on an ice shelf deep inside the Antarctic Circle. In this lyrical book, Francis plumbs his fascination with the barren continent, the very blankness of which intrigued him, empty as it is of human history or cultural memory. Not only was the Antarctic solitude calling him, but there was also the lure of penguins: a breeding colony of approximately 60,000 emperor penguins was within snow-machine travel of the survey station. As the Antarctic winter falls and the emperor penguins begin their epic breeding season, the author writes of life in a research station in extreme conditions, 14 people lodged together for duration of the polar night. Woven into the narrative are stories from past Antarctic explorers, most notably the disaster and miraculous escape of the Shackleton expedition, as well as lesser-known biologists and their early notes on emperor penguins and the embryology of their eggs. Francis is an evocative writer; we feel the cold and the dark, revel in the silence, and find kinship with the penguins. He says to the penguins at the end, I couldn't have done it without you. -- Nancy Bent "A finely written account of an extreme experience of the Antarctic, worthy to stand beside some of the great travel narratives in the English language." * RSL Ondaatje Prize Judges * "Empire Antarctica is the embodiment of everything I admire in travel writing -- a great journey, intense isolation, wide reading, vivid writing, scientific research, and something in the nature of an old-fashioned ordeal. That Gavin Francis is a medical doctor, with an important role to play in the darkness and cold at the ends of the earth, is a bonus. I loved this book." -- Paul Theroux "One of the best travel titles I have read in a long time. Thoughtful, lyrical, extremely well written, it's a triumph." -- Giles Foden * Conde Nast Traveller * "A beautiful, profound and highly readable account of a remarkable personal adventure. Francis's pacing is deft, his prose vivid, his research worn lightly. This is probably as close as most of us will ever get to experiencing a modern polar winter. Empire Antarctica is surely destined to become a standard, not so much of travel as of staying very still." -- Ed O'Loughlin * Daily Telegraph * "Francis' best writing (and it is excellent)... is Robert Macfarlane on ice. This writing achieves the 'quilted quality' of silence, and through it we are brought to a new landscape of words." -- Katherine MacInnes * Literary

*About the AuthorGavin Francis was born in 1975 and brought up in Fife, Scotland. After qualifying from medical school in Edinburgh he spent ten years traveling, visiting all seven continents. He has worked in Africa and India, made several trips to the Arctic, and crossed Eurasia and Australia by motorcycle. His first book, True North was published in 2008. He has lectured at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge and the Edinburgh Book Festival, and is a regular speaker at the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. He lives in Edinburgh.