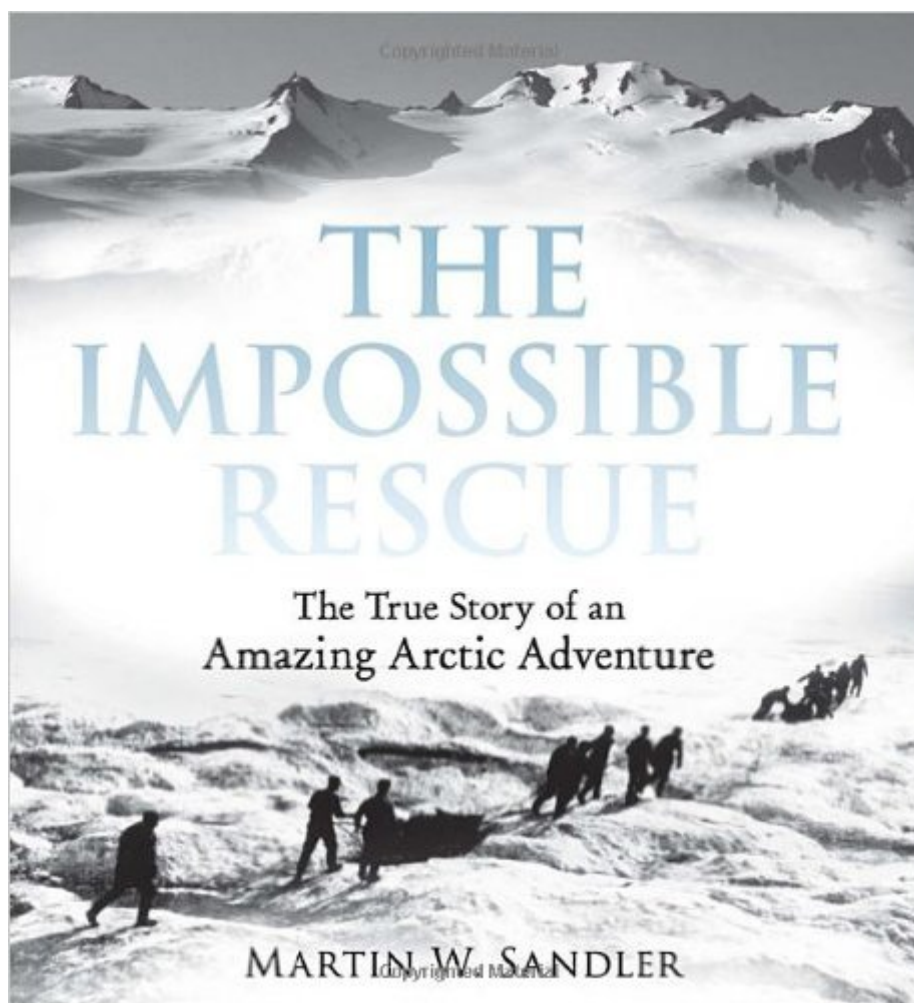


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# The Impossible Rescue: The True Story Of An Amazing Arctic Adventure



## Synopsis

The dead of an Arctic winter. Whaling ships full of men, stranded in ice. Follow three rescuers in a race against time and all odds in this heartpounding true adventure. In 1897, whaling in the Arctic waters off Alaska's coast was as dangerous as it was lucrative. And in that particular year, winter blasted early, bringing storms and ice packs that caught eight American whale ships and three hundred sailors off guard. Their ships locked in ice, with no means of escape, the whalers had limited provisions on board, and little hope of surviving until warmer temperatures arrived many months later. Here is the incredible story of three men sent by President McKinley to rescue them. The mission? A perilous trek over 1,500 miles of nearly impassable Alaskan terrain, in the bone-chilling months of winter, to secure two herds of reindeer (for food) and find a way to guide them to the whalers before they starve. With the help of photographs and journal entries by one of the rescuers, Martin W. Sandler takes us on every step of their riveting journey, facing raging blizzards, killing cold, injured sled dogs, and setbacks to test the strongest of wills.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1270L (What's this?)

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; Reprint edition (July 22, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763670936

ISBN-13: 978-0763670931

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.5 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (54 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #68,148 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Polar Regions #29 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Exploration & Discovery #50 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1800s

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

I defy you to read this book without being amazed and impressed. When 8 whaling ships and about 300 men became trapped in the ice off the coast of Alaska in 1897, they were well and truly stuck.

They couldn't tweet for help, they couldn't phone for reinforcements, they couldn't be flown out; food couldn't be dropped to them....would they be left to freeze or starve? Thanks to the Overland Relief Expedition and the bravery of men, women and animals, most of the men were saved. Author Martin Sandler tells a story that will keep you on the edge of your seat, giving full credit to the brave Americans and native people of Alaska, and not sidestepping the less-than-honorable way that a few of the men behaved. Dogs and reindeer also pay a dear price so that the men may safely return when the ice breaks up. Any young reader (and a surprising number of adults) will thrill to this story, accompanied by a great number of photographs taken by a member of the expedition. Sandler includes endnotes to tell what happened to some of the key players later in life, and includes source notes that make this an excellent teaching tool as well as a riveting story in its own right. Highly recommended for readers moved by Shackleton's icy adventures, those interested in the Iditarod, or anyone generally interested in survival stories.

About me: I'm a middle school/high school librarian  
How I got this book: Sent to me by the publisher

Reason for Reading: This book covers many of my interests; the time period, true tales of survival and life in the Arctic. I had not hear of this true story and it appealed to me. When first setting eyes upon this book, the thing that strikes one is the coffee-table book appeal. The book is an over-sized square and illustrated on almost every page with contemporary photographs taken by one of the rescue members, Dr. Call, from start to finish. This is an amazing photographic memorial to this amazing rescue attempt. Nothing like it had ever been attempted before but public outcry at the dire straits these hundreds of whalers were caught up in prompted then President McKinley to form a rescue mission with objectives but no true sense of how these objectives were to be met. That was left up to the handful of men eventually left in charge of the overland rescue mission. An enthralling story to read about, the whalers were often their own worst problem as the cold, hunger and lethargy left them with low morale and little sense of self-preservation. Sandler has presented the tale by using the rescuers' own words as much as possible. Culled from their own journals which they kept upon this journey. Sandler himself does not have exactly the most favourable voice for telling a story and the segues he's written connecting the contemporary voices can be a bit dry; but fortunately the rescuers do most of the story telling. An extremely harrowing journey and rescue which, in reality, had very little chance at success, yet due to the character and determination of those involved succeeded despite the odds. The publisher recommends for Gr. 5+, personally due to the writing style I would recommend most for Gr. 7+. However, it makes a fine read for history or adventure buffs of all ages interested in the topic.

Wow, It's astonishing to see what these men went through. First off, this book covers many things such as the arctic, survival, determination, and teamwork, If these men had just given up or didn't work together, than this story would have had a completely different ending. Besides telling the story of the rescue of which was the first of this type of scale, a large amount of photos are included which provide some more insight of what it was like for the rescue part. Besides the photos, there are also some quotes from journals the survivors kept and they also provide insight on what it must have been like. These men had to go through a lot like hunger, the cold, losing faith and much more. Despite the odds, these men stayed strong, and their story of survival is a must read.

This is one of my favorite books. It shows the endurance and perseverance of the American people. Who would have tried to rescue these people by putting their very lives at risk? Everything had to be just right, i.e. the weather, the food supply, as well as the cooperation of others met along the route. Everyone had to be willing to risk all and do their part for these people to be rescued. It is an easy read for not only adults, but also for children from about 12 years old and up..

I bought this book for my son, who absolutely loved it and recommended I read it too. It's an incredible story of survival and human spirit. The descriptive nature of Mr. Sandler's writing really makes you feel how desperate, cold, isolated and nearly hopeless the situation must have been. For kids today, it's a real chance to see how much the human spirit can muster when needed, especially in light of the lack of technological advances we have today. Well-done Mr. Sandler!

This truly is an amazing story and a fascinating read! The story is told precisely and interestingly; I didn't want to put the book down. The layout is attractive, with wide margins and black and white photos which enhance the atmosphere of the arctic landscape. An excellent book for students who "need to read a non-fiction book as a prelude to a research project" (an actual assignment for the eighth grade in our town). It's the type of grand adventure book you want to curl up with on the couch, but it's too large and heavy to do that with--that's the only regrettable thing about this book. The maps are fascinating; I'd never heard a story like this before.

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