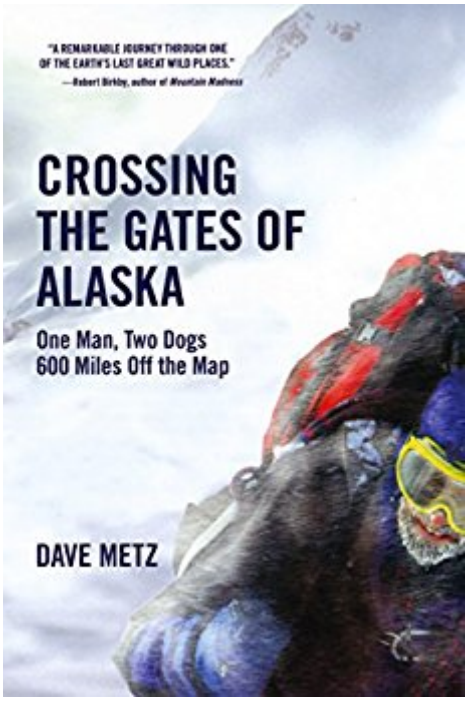
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Crossing The Gates Of Alaska: One Man, Two Dogs 600 Miles Off The Map



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Synopsis

The snow forms the beginning of a near vertical chute that falls at least a thousand feet. My feet, shaking, manage to hug the thin edge of solid rock. I feel my heart creep to my throat and warm sweat drip down my back, defying the subzero Arctic air. Somehow I reach a plateau and think the worst is behind me. I couldn’t be more wrong.This is the story of Dave Metz’s death-defying, breathtaking, and passionate journey through the Arctic outback. Driven by his lifetime reverence for the outdoors, Dave, with the help of his two beloved Airedale terrier dogs, embarks on a three-month epic of survival and astonishing determination that rivals the most daring world-class explorations.I find myself on a gigantic trench hemmed in on both sides by peaks that look like ice-daggers from another world. The idea that I’m at the mercy of the wild sinks in. . .and I desperately want out of this endless, icebound maze.Skiing up frozen rivers, enduring bitter nights at twenty below zero, and staggering across vast reaches of barren tundra and scrub woodlands, Metz’s unprecedented 600-mile trek took him to the remotest regions of the untamed North. In frightening and stunning detail, he shows us an unwavering spirit and a compelling sense of adventure that can only be satisfied when truly free. . .Dave Metz has been to Alaska over a dozen times in the last twenty years. He’s kayaked across Alaska twice, once with his beloved dog Jonny riding in the bow, and lived there for two years in remote locations. He’s also kayaked and trekked in Peru, Brazil, Canada, and Borneo, and has hiked across most of Oregon and Washington. Despite his forays away from home, he managed to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Portland State University, where he also did course work in zoology. He currently works for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as a seasonal fish biologist. In addition to studying mammals and the preservation of indigenous cultures in rain forest regions, he continues zealously to embark on wilderness survival and exploration adventures, cycling, and hiking trips. He lives Philomath, Oregon.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I saw this pop up as a Kindle freebie and decided to take the chance. I'm glad I did, but have some serious reservations about the book as a whole.First the bad: Nothing really happens. Metz skis, hikes, nearly freezes, nearly starves, nearly gets eaten by wolves, nearly kills his dogs and after all is said and done he has only moved from point A to point B. The journey was pointless and seemed to be done just to prove it can be done. Not that any sane person would want to do it, but there it is. Kind of reminded me of Helge Pederson's "motorcyle tour" through the Darien Gap in "Ten Years on Two Wheels". Why? The Gap is not made for motorcycles the same as the Brooks Range is not made for human foot traffic. In the overall scheme of things it was a monumentally stupid adventure.Now the good: The best part for me about reading this book was that it helped a little in understanding one of my oldest friends who has the same drive towards the wilderness. A few years ago he chucked it all and went to the woods to live in a hand built cabin. I gained an appreciation for Airedales (might even adopt one this Summer), learned a lot about how to stay warm in horrendous conditions, got an insight into what kind of people live in the wilds of Alaska and got a feel for what people are capable of when driven by a singular desire to accomplish a goal no matter how worthy it may be.

The story is real. We get his thoughts and descriptive tellings of the adventure. It's not filled with fluff. I really enjoyed it!

I have very mixed feelings about this book. But I don't feel that the time I spent reading it was at all a waste of time.As has been mentioned by other reviewers, this book is the story of a hike (ski) across

a large section of Alaska. In some ways, it is similar to books about hiking the Appalachian Trail, biking across the country, or other such activities. However, unlike most of these books, I can't imagine myself ever even attempting this feat. Most of these trips are tests of endurance. This trip was seriously a life threatening experience. So, as a story of man pushing to his limits, this books definitely qualifies.The descriptions of the land he walked through were amazing. While there is no way I could even imagine retracing his steps, spending time in those parts of Alaska would be great.On the other hand, I'm not sure if the author (or editor) ever read the book after it was finished. At several times in the book, the author repeated information that he provided a little earlier. Either the author thought the readers had a short attention span, or he didn't do a final read through of the book.But that's only a minor quibble. Annoying when the book repeated itself, but easily ignored.What bothered me more about the book was the self-centeredness of the author. Many times throughout the book, the author states that our modern society (with its 9 to 5 daily work orientation, with limited time for vacation) is unhealthy for man. Instead, we are supposed to emulate his lifestyle. But never does he seem to notice that his trip is only possible due to the excess wealth created by our modern society. I have no problem with how the author chooses to spend his life. However, he sure seems to have a problem with my life choices.To add icing on the cake, I suspect that his self-centeredness may explain the culmination of his relationship with his long suffering girlfriend.Go ahead and read the book if you want to read about a section of the world you'll probably never be able to visit. Read the book if you want to hear about a man's choice of life threatening adventure. But don't read the book if you want cognizant commentary about modern society.

The journey through the pages was as grueling as the adventure. Wish he would have wrote this from the Dogs point of view. Theydeserve more credit due for their survival.

Unless one has been in Alaska or a real wilderness you can not imagine the vastness and emptiness. Many will read `Crossing the Gates of Alaska' and ask why. Why would you struggle and face near death and definite symptoms of starvation just to cross a wilderness? One of the first thoughts many will have as they read the cover of the book; "one man, two dogs" will be to picture Huskies, but Dave Metz has his 2 Airedale terriers to help and keep him company on his journey.Metz's way of describing his journey can let you picture the wildness he travels through - its' beauty and its' danger. If you have ever had a wonderful dog, a dog that is as good as another human being, if not better, you will understand his connection with his two. His dream and love of

the wilderness shows through on his day by day account of his journey across Alaska.There is some moralizing done concerning most people's disregard for the natural life and care of the earth and the philosophy of why eat locally when you can have Swiss chocolate. It's hard to understand his statement, "hunting is a nasty little act of my journey", when that is a part of the natural process of surviving. But that shouldn't turn you away from reading a captivating account of a man's test of himself and what can be a discovery for the reader of an incredible place on this planet.

I judge a book I've read by asking myself at the end, "Am I glad I read this book?" Crossing the Gates of Alaska was a waste of money and my time. I don't like Dave Metz. His venture was indeed noble and brave but his risking the lives of those two dogs just so he could have the comfort of companionship was reckless and narcissistic. He had no control over the dogs at all which put the dog's lives in danger everyday, as he pointed out all through the book. There were parts that were interesting but for the most part it was very boring and monotonous writing. He also repeated himself often and in detail - again. Dave is selfish. Why was he making his dog Jonny, who this book was mostly about, go hiking with him when he's dying? I wonder if Dave has grown up any? Boring book, aggravating author.

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