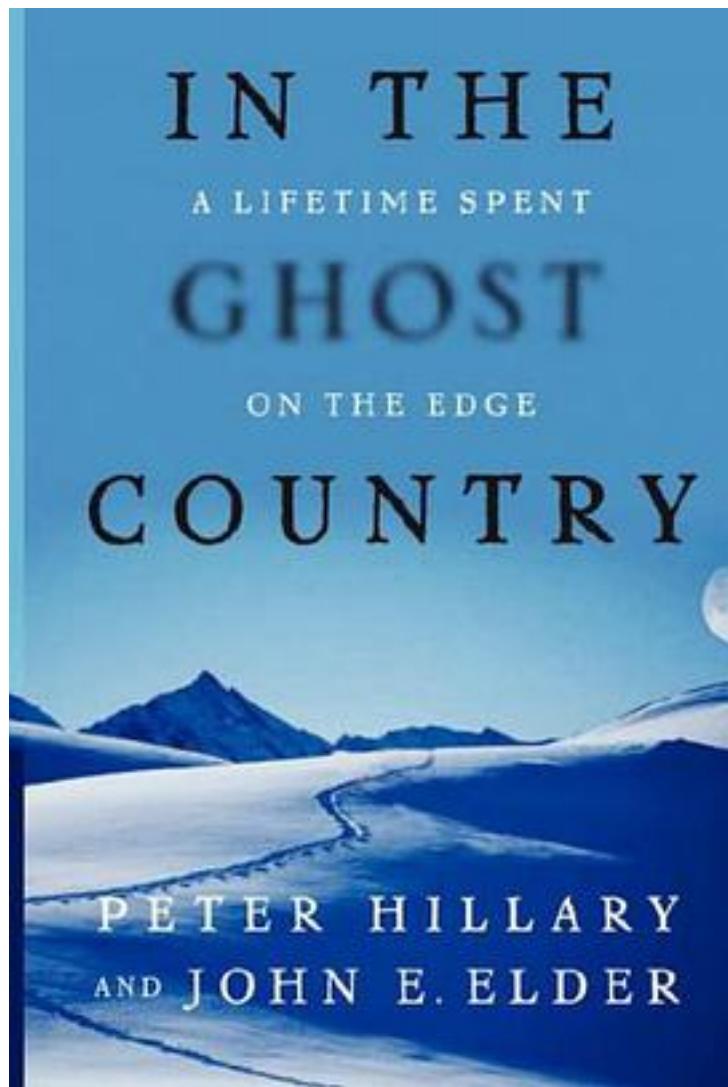


In the Ghost Country



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A memoir of extraordinary depth and searing honesty, *In the Ghost Country* is the story of Peter Hillary's physical and emotional journey across the icy wastes of Antarctica. A place where the thoughts and memories of a lifetime were called forth by the blank slate of the Antarctic snows -- so real that the ghosts of lost friends and loved ones walked with him in the white maelstrom. In the Antarctic summer of 1998-99, Peter Hillary and two companions skied to the South Pole -- each man pulling a 440-pound sled 900 miles across some of the most forbidding country on earth. The plan was to complete the tragic journey of Captain Robert Falcon Scott, to the Pole and back. But under the pressure of a relentless media spotlight, fatal team chemistry, and food and fuel stores, the expedition fragmented into hostile isolation. Instead of completing Scott's journey, they found they were repeating it. For Peter Hillary, this was the loneliest trek of his life. Estranged from his companions, tortured by the sensory deprivation of "the great white everywhere," Hillary's journey became a hallucinogenic pilgrimage through a country where "he could see the dead and the places of the dead": the ghosts of too many friends who had perished at his side in the mountains; and most powerfully, the ghost of his beloved mother, who it seemed "had turned up on the ice to keep me company." *In the Ghost Country* is the story of that trip, a chronicle of profound isolation, grief, and loneliness. It is a meditation on a lifetime spent on the edge. Told here are the tragedies: on Ama Dablam in Nepal, a near perfect climb until its shocking finish with an unexpected death; on Makalu where half the party was wiped out; on Everest where two more were lost, including a great friend; and later on K2, in 1995, where Hillary barely survived the storm that killed seven people. But here also are the "marvelous times": Growing up in New Zealand, where the family's holiday adventures were turned into documentaries; first seeing Everest at seven years of age; the near-fatal teenage adventures; working on the schools and hospitals that Sir Edmund built for the Nepalese people; traveling with his father and Neil Armstrong to the North Pole; summiting Everest twice. Informed by a strong literary sensibility, *In the Ghost Country* is compelling contemplation of adventure and a joyful tribute to "the rapture" of getting "out there" on the edge.

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