



Island of the Lost: Shipwrecked at the Edge of the World

By Joan Druett

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Island of the Lost: Shipwrecked at the Edge of the World By Joan Druett

Auckland Island is a godforsaken place in the middle of the Southern Ocean, 285 miles south of New Zealand. With year-round freezing rain and howling winds, it is one of the most forbidding places in the world. To be shipwrecked there means almost certain death.

In 1864 Captain Thomas Musgrave and his crew of four aboard the schooner *Grafton* wreck on the southern end of the island. Utterly alone in a dense coastal forest, plagued by stinging blowflies and relentless rain, Captain Musgrave—rather than succumb to this dismal fate—inspires his men to take action. With barely more than their bare hands, they build a cabin and, remarkably, a forge, where they manufacture their tools. Under Musgrave's leadership, they band together and remain civilized through even the darkest and most terrifying days.

Incredibly, at the same time on the opposite end of the island—twenty miles of impassable cliffs and chasms away—the *Invercauld* wrecks during a horrible storm. Nineteen men stagger ashore. Unlike Captain Musgrave, the captain of the *Invercauld* falls apart given the same dismal circumstances. His men fight and split up; some die of starvation, others turn to cannibalism. Only three survive. Musgrave and all of his men not only endure for nearly two years, they also plan their own astonishing escape, setting off on one of the most courageous sea voyages in history.

Using the survivors' journals and historical records, award-winning maritime historian Joan Druett brings this extraordinary untold story to life, a story about leadership and the fine line between order and chaos.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In early 1864, heading back to Australia after a failed mining expedition, the crew of the *Grafton* encountered a violent storm and found themselves shipwrecked in the Auckland Islands, off the coast of New Zealand. Druett, a maritime historian (*In the Wake of Madness*), draws upon the journals of the ship's captain, Thomas Musgrave, and prospector François Raynal to reveal how the crew pulled together and made the best of their circumstances for nearly two years. By contrast, when the *Invercauld* ran aground on the other side of the island months later—beyond an impassable mountain range, and hence unaware they were not alone—the surviving sailors quickly began eating their dead crewmates out of desperation. Soon, only three remained, the ineffectual captain and another officer being kept alive by a resourceful seaman. Druett tells the two stories in strict chronological order, allowing readers to become familiar with the *Grafton* party before weaving the *Invercauld* survivors into the narrative. She zeroes in on the salient details of their ordeals, identifying the plants that kept the castaways from contracting scurvy or sketching out an improvised recipe for soap with equal aplomb. This is a fine addition to the genre of survival tales like *Endurance* or *In the Heart of the Sea*. (Jul. 20)

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Using diaries, ship logs, and newspaper accounts, Druett re-creates the different experiences of the survivors of two wrecked vessels. In January 1864, the five-man crew of the *Grafton* left Sydney, Australia, intending to locate a source of argentiferous tin allegedly to be found on remote Campbell Island. In May 1864, the *Invercauld* left Melbourne for South America, with no passengers and a crew of 25, to sail to Callao to take on a cargo of fertilizer. Neither ship reached its final destination. Instead, both were shipwrecked on opposite ends of the same subantarctic island. *Grafton's* crew survived, and could even be said to have prospered. By working together, the men managed to build a shelter, hunt sea lions, and, eventually, build a boat and launch their own rescue team. The initial 19 survivors of the *Invercauld*, on the other hand, fell into arguing and quibbling with no direction or plan. Their number soon dwindled to 16, and then to 3. Viewers of television's *Survivor* and readers of survival novels will enjoy *Island*, and the book could provide teens with the know-how to stay alive if they ever found themselves in a similar situation.—Joanne Ligamari, Rio Linda School District, Sacramento, CA

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

The author of several works on nautical history and a maritime mystery series, Joan Druett is a knowledgeable, entertaining tour guide through the seafaring life of the 19th century and the hardships of "castaway life" (*New York Times Book Review*). Druett illustrates how each group coped with the hostile conditions and why their respective strategies (or lack thereof) succeeded or failed by allowing the details of each story to drive the narrative. Some critics found those details too graphic—particularly the descriptions of cannibalism and clubbing baby seals—but Druett's straightforward, restrained writing style steers clear of sensationalism or melodrama. Based on survivors' memoirs, interviews, and newspaper articles, *Island of the Lost* is an enthralling tale with a timeless message.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dan Hanner:

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