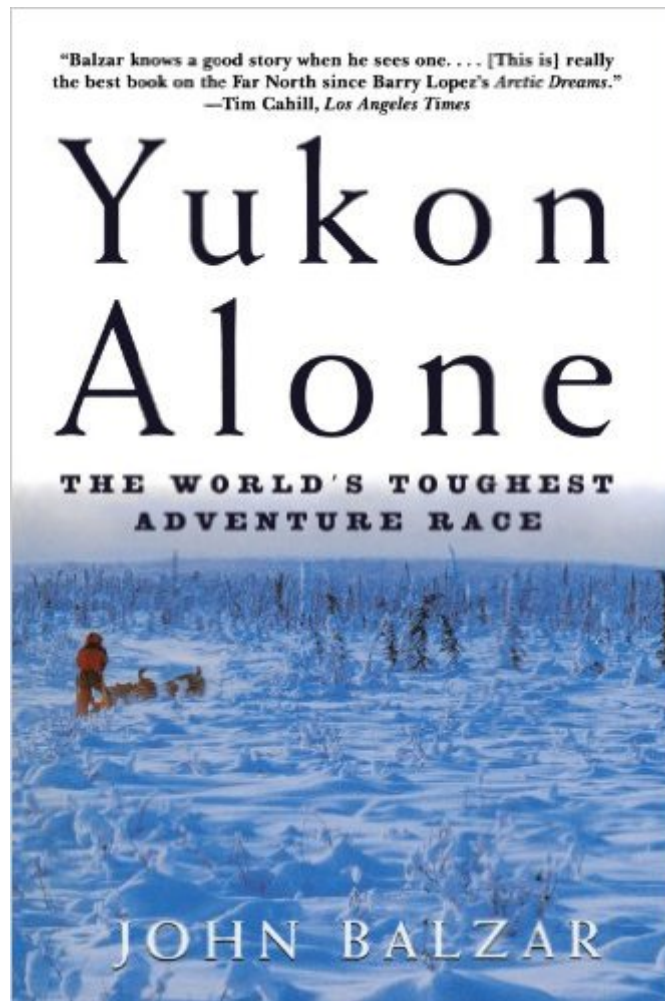


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Yukon Alone: The World's Toughest Adventure Race



Synopsis

The Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race is one of the most challenging sporting events in the world. Every February, a handful of hardy souls spends over two weeks racing sleds pulled by fourteen dogs over 1,023 miles of frozen rivers, icy mountain passes, and spruce forests as big as entire states, facing temperatures that drop to forty degrees below zero on nights that are seventeen hours long. Why would anyone want to enter this race? John Balzar—who moved to Alaska and lived on the trail—treats us to a vivid account of the grueling race itself, offering an insightful look at the men and women who have moved to this rugged and beautiful place. Readers will also be fascinated by Balzar's account of what goes into the training and care of the majestic dogs who pull the sleds and whose courage, strength, and devotion make them the true heroes of this story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Balzar is first and foremost a reporter, with a reporter's unerring nose for news. So it should come as no surprise that word of the Yukon Quest, a 1,023-mile dog sled race through some of the coldest and most challenging terrain in the world, would capture his attention and get him started on the trail of a good story. What was a surprise, as much to Balzar as to his readers I suspect, was the degree to which the race and its participants came to matter. Quirky, devoted to a sport that doesn't translate well to television, and immersed in a way of life that 90% of the population can't begin to fathom, the people Balzar meets when he first heads north have "the power to fascinate." Following the advice of George "Skip" Brink, a construction worker who volunteers at the race, Balzar stops

taking notes, sets aside his writing tools, and asks what he can do to help out with the race. Thus begins his stint as a poop-scooper and veterinary assistant at the race, in which he slowly comes to realize that he is there to learn as much about himself as about the race. Yukon Alone is full of Balzar's characteristically insightful and amusing observations on life as he sees it, but it is not as polished or self-assured as some of his other work. In fact, the reader gets the distinct impression that Balzar is flying by the seat of his pants, figuring things out as the story progresses, which lends an immediacy and intensity to the writing. We are there, for instance, when he loses control of his dogsled team and ends up in a heap on the side of a trail with a nasty gash in his head. We stand by and watch with embarrassment as he asks a friend to fly him to see a woman friend, even though he knows he is risking both their lives.

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