

# THE ICE BALLOON

ALEC  
WILKINSON

READ BY JOHN PRUDEN

This is the thrilling story of visionary explorer S. A. Andrée, who in 1897 attempted to discover the North Pole by flying to it in a hydrogen balloon. The book opens in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when nations vied for the greatest discoveries of the planet's still unknown spaces and newspapers followed every journey. It was also an age of scientific discovery, and Alec Wilkinson shows how these two cultural trends came together in the Swedish engineer S. A. Andrée, leading him to launch perhaps the most daring assault on the North Pole ever made. Andrée's flight and the journey, based on the expedition's diaries and photographs dramatically recovered thirty-three years after the balloon came down, provide a book filled with suspense and adventure, a haunting story of high ambition and courage made tangible with the detail, beauty, and devastating conditions of traveling and dwelling on the ice.

**"Alec Wilkinson's writing is so flawless and engaging that I'd read him on a packed subway at rush hour."**

—Sebastian Junger, award-winning author of *The Perfect Storm* and *War*

**"Wilkinson...writes with insight and flair...[His] prose style suits the spare polar landscape, making his occasional poetic touches even more effective."**

—*New York Times Book Review*

**"Fabulous...Readers meet 'a parade of fanatics' who attempt to reach the Pole, discover what is there, and return alive."**

—*Boston Globe*

**ALEC WILKINSON** began writing for the *New Yorker* in 1980. Before that he was a policeman in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, and before that a rock-and-roll musician. He has published nine other books—two memoirs, two collections of essays, three biographical portraits, and two pieces of reporting—most of which first appeared in the *New Yorker*. His honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Lyndhurst Prize, and the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. He lives with his wife and son in New York City.

Running Time: 7½ Hours • Unabridged



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