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Host: Welcome to *World Adventure*. Today's guest is Paul Smith, who is here to talk about polar exploration. That is, exploration in the Arctic in the north, and the Antarctic in the south. Welcome, Paul.

Polar exploration expert and historian Paul Smith: Thank you.

Host: Let's start with some history. When did explorers first enter the Arctic?

Smith: Well, people have traveled to the Arctic for thousands of years. But most exploration started around 1500. That's when explorers began trying to cross the Arctic to find shorter ways for ships to travel between Europe and Asia. They called it the Northwest Passage.

Host: Were these early explorers successful?

Smith: Actually, not until 1851. That was the first successful passage through the Arctic.

Host: What about Antarctica?

Smith: So, English explorers began traveling to Antarctic waters to hunt seals and whales in the late 1700s. But explorers didn't land on the continent of Antarctica until the late 1800s. In the early 1900s, explorers raced to be the first to reach the South Pole.

Host: Why did it take so long to explore these areas?

Smith: You know, polar exploration is very dangerous. And Antarctica is not only the coldest place on Earth, but it's also the windiest. Winds will often reach 80 kilometers per hour. And wind storms can last for days.

Host: Wow. So what motivated these explorers?

Smith: Some were scientists who wanted to research the land and the climate. But many were people who simply wanted to be the first to reach the "ends" of the Earth.

Host: Wow, I just can't imagine having that kind of energy. ...

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Speaker: This time, we're going to talk about Ernest Shackleton and his trip on the ship the *Endurance*. The *Endurance* left London on August 1, 1914. It took them over four months to reach the Antarctic Circle. First, they sailed to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where they picked up more men for their crew. They left Buenos Aires on October 26 and stopped at a whaling station in South Georgia—a place where whaling boats stopped while hunting whales in the Atlantic Ocean. This was the last stop before Antarctica where

any people lived. So on December fifth, the crew said good-bye to the people at the whaling station and sailed toward Antarctica. It was the last time they would see any other people for quite some time ...

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Professor Zachary Boyd: E01 When we think of the great explorers, we typically remember them for achieving their goals, right? But today I'm going to tell you the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his trip to Antarctica. Now his goal was to lead the first group to cross Antarctica on foot. However, he never reached this goal. In fact, everything went terribly wrong. So why do we remember Shackleton? Because of the great leadership he showed during the trip. **E02** Shackleton left England in 1914 on the ship the *Endurance*. He had a crew of 28 men, including the ship's officers and sailors, and some scientists who came along to do research. In January 1915, they entered the Antarctic Circle. **(COACHING TIP 1)** However, it was colder than normal, and the ocean was full of ice, and the *Endurance* soon became stuck. Shackleton and his crew realized they'd have to wait ten months, until November—which is springtime in the Antarctic Circle—for the ice to melt. **E03** So, there they lived, on the ship, stuck in the ice, and waiting for spring. Now Shackleton—who was called "the boss" by his men—kept the morale up by keeping them busy. Now, in those days, ships' officers and scientists didn't usually interact with sailors. The officers and scientists usually got better food and lived in better conditions. But Shackleton needed everyone to work as a team and not as individuals. So everyone shared the jobs on the ship: **(COACHING TIP 2)** The officers and scientists labored right beside the sailors cleaning the floors, and the sailors helped with the science experiments. Everyone ate the same food together at the same table. And consequently, the men all became friends and learned to work together. **E04** Over the long winter, as the ship floated with the ice, the ice began to crush the ship. The crew could hear the awful sound of the wood bending and breaking as the ice closed in. And so in October of 1915, Shackleton ordered everyone to move off the ship and onto the ice. For nearly a month, they lived on the ice, next to the dying ship, watching it get slowly crushed. **E05** Then on November 21, 1915, with Shackleton's cry of "She's going, boys!" the men watched, horrified, as the *Endurance* came apart and sank into the water. **E06** But even when everything seemed hopeless, Shackleton didn't give up. He promised his men that if they worked hard and stayed together, they would get home. Now, at this point, Shackleton's leadership style was very important to

the survival of the crew. Because of the way he treated the men—treating each man with respect—the crew became extremely loyal. They believed in him. If Shackleton believed they would get home, well, the men believed it, too. **E07** With the arrival of summer in March of 1916, the ice they had been living on began to melt. At this point, Shackleton and his men knew that they had to get to land. Now, they had floated close enough to see Elephant Island, a small, rocky island about 100 miles off in the distance. **(COACHING TIP 3)** So in April, Shackleton and the crew got into three small boats they had saved from the ship. And after seven days of rough water and freezing temperatures, they finally made it to Elephant Island. It had been 467 days—more than a year since the men had stood on land. However, they still had absolutely no hope of rescue. No one knew where they were. **E08** At this point, Shackleton made his riskiest decision yet. He decided to take one of their small boats and sail back to a whaling station on South Georgia, an island about 800 miles away, and get help. **(COACHING TIP 4)** He left Elephant Island with five men, promising to return and rescue the others. After 17 days of sailing through some of the roughest waters in the world, Shackleton and the five men finally made it to South Georgia—amazingly. However, they still had to walk for 36 hours over ice-covered mountains to reach the whaling station. So the job wasn't done. And when they walked inside, as the story goes, the station manager took one look at these guys and said, "Who are you?" It had been so long that everyone thought Shackleton and his crew were dead. **E09** Over the next four months, Shackleton tried three times to rescue the men back on Elephant Island. But the sea was still full of ice, and the ships couldn't make it. Meanwhile, the men on Elephant Island were surviving, but had started to lose hope. They began to think that Shackleton had never made it to South Georgia, and that they'd be stuck in Antarctica forever. **E10** Then on August 30, 1916, nearly two years after their trip had begun, the men saw a ship approaching in the distance. They ran to the beach, waving and shouting. It was Shackleton, coming to rescue them! Shackleton, from the ship, counted the men on shore and cried with happiness when he saw that they'd all survived. He'd kept his promise to them. **E11** For this, Shackleton is credited as one of the great heroes of the time. Not for reaching his original goal, but for leading his men through some of the worst conditions in the world, and keeping his promise to them to bring them home alive.

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Hannah: ... I didn't see it either.

River: Guys, I think we're supposed to be talking about the lecture we heard today.

Mia: Oh right, Shackleton!

Manny: Wow! That was a great story! That guy Shackleton, he was a great leader. There's no doubt

that without great leadership, the ending would've been way different.

River: I was thinking the same thing. It's unbelievable how they survived all that cold weather, and not one person died.

Hannah: Yeah, so, I'm curious about everyone's thoughts: What was it about this guy that made him such a great leader?

Mia: Hm, I'd say his treatment of everyone as equals. You know, like how he made the scientists clean the floors alongside the sailors.

River: Yeah, exactly—that would definitely give you a team feeling. Especially under such bad conditions.

Manny: Hm, I agree somewhat. But I think it was the big decisions he made. I mean, how many times did he decide to move forward instead of just waiting for someone to help?

Hannah: True. First, off the ship and onto the ice, then from the ice to Elephant Island.

River: Then from Elephant Island to the whaling station. And then something like three tries before he finally rescued the other men?

Manny: Yeah. See? Like I said: great leadership! People need great leaders, or they just panic or give up.

Mia: Yeah.

Hannah: Yeah.

River: That is so true.

Hannah: I agree.

Manny: That's why I'm running for class president.

River: Really? I didn't know that. Congratulations!

Mia: Oh! Good luck with that!