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Roald Amundsen

The name of the Norwegian Roald Amundsen is familiar to everyone who is interested in the history of the exploration of the polar regions. The list of his achievements includes the conquest of the South Pole and the first successful flight on the Norway airship through the point of the North Pole. Amundsen was the first person to cross the Northwest Passage and the first civilian pilot in Norway.

This Norwegian had a Viking spirit. The word «first» can often be found next to his last name. Having set a goal, he stubbornly walked towards it. Senior comrade Fridtjof Nansen said about Amundsen: «The explosive force lived in him.»

As a child, Roald decided to become a polar explorer. To achieve his goal, he read literature on polar exploration and travel. He was especially interested in the missing expedition of the British explorer John Franklin.

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Since his youth, he tried to get used to the cold and physical activities. In winter the young man made exhausting ski crossings. The windows in his room were always wide open, and he preferred a rug to the bed, hiding with one coat or newspapers. The same effort was given to training the mind. «Any person does not know so much, and each new skill can be useful to him,» Amundsen said. He read books on meteorology, oceanology, learned to conduct magnetic observations.

Amundsen was quite tall (180 cm), thin build. On the elongated face, the Roman nose stood out especially well. A mesmerizing impression was made by blue eyes under thick black eyebrows. The gaze of these eyes was cold, almost freezing. Thin lips were located under the brightly delineated nasolabial fold. It seemed that this stern face had never been touched by a smile.

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Storm Suit of a Polar Explorer

The lowest temperature on the Earth was recorded in July 1983 at the Vostok research station in Central Antarctica. At about 5 a.m. the thermometer dropped to a mark of 89.20 C below zero.

Polar explorers live in Vostok not only in extremely low temperatures, but also in high mountains. These are the most difficult conditions for human life. Without special equipment, you can die. One of the outerwear options was a storm suit.

A storm suit was worn in snowstorms over a regular suit or wadded coat, depending on the air temperature. The costume was sewn with a dense water-repellent fabric - rubberized percale.

It consisted of a spacious shirt - a jacket with a hood, and wide trousers with braces (suspenders). The jacket had a breast pocket with two buttons, where polar explorers could put small items. The silvery color of the suit did not allow it to attract large amounts of solar radiation.

The costume was complemented by double fur mittens to the elbow and a mask. At temperatures below

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-50 ° C, you could not go outside without a mask on your face. When breathing through the mouth in such a severe frost, there is a high probability of frostbite of the respiratory tract and lungs. Warm air in the mask was maintained thanks to electric heating, the nutritional element of which was hidden under the outer clothing and fastened to the shoulder.

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Reindeer

Reindeer is an artiodactyl mammal of the deer family. Its distribution area covers the lands of the northern part of Eurasia and North America. The largest number of deer is observed on the Taimyr Peninsula. The harsh tundra, forest-tundra, as well as the northern taiga are the places where this animal has existed for many thousands of years. It has perfectly adapted to both mountainous areas and plains. There are two types of reindeer: a wild and domesticated one. Currently, there are much more domesticated deer.

The body length of the animal is between 2 and 2.2 meters. Weight ranges from 120 to 210 kilograms. The height at the withers reaches 1.4 meters. Reindeer living in the tundra, as well as on the islands of the Arctic Ocean, are inferior in size to their southern counterparts who prefer to live in taiga regions.

The fur on the body of a reindeer is short, but warm, as it has a thick undercoat. The length of the hairs does not exceed 2.5 centimeters in winter. In summer, this value is 1 centimeter. The further to the north the deer lives, the lighter it is. In most cases, the fur consists of both dark and light colors. In the summer, the gray-brown color is interspersed with coffee one, and in the

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cold winter light areas are diluted with dark ones.

Horns grow in both males and females. Males part with their horns at the beginning of winter. Females shed their horns immediately after the birth of their cubs. The hooves of the reindeer are wide, with the lower part curved inward. This makes it easier to dig for snow and forage.

The total life span of these animals is 25 years.

Reindeer, living in the polar tundra, spends the summer months on the Arctic coast. Here the north wind creates a pleasant coolness, drives away the gnaw that constantly annoys the animal. Winter is time for migration. Artiodactyls move to the northern regions of the taiga. Only deer from the Arctic islands remain in the field.

Reindeer herds have always been migrating along the same route for decades. They cross straits and rivers in the same places. Animals swim very well and freely overcome many kilometers of water. They can move for 500 kilometers or more. Migration begins in September, and deer reappear in the tundra in May.

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Taiga deer go further into the mountains in summer. By winter they return to their native woodlands and marshy plains.

The diet of the reindeer consists mainly of plants. On the first place is reindeer moss. Other lichens, grass, berries are also eaten. Deer does not disdain mushrooms. In winter, the reindeer quench their thirst by eating snow. It is noteworthy that he drinks sea water, and in large quantities, to maintain the salt balance in the body. For the same reason, it gnaws at the discarded horns. Sometimes deer gnaw each other's horns precisely because of the lack of mineral salts in the diet.

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Myths of the peoples of the Arctic

The Arctic is an endless land, where snow lies seven to eight months a year, and the temperature in winter drops below minus 60 degrees. Under these conditions, the few hunters, cattle breeders, and reindeer herders have to struggle for their survival.

The indigenous peoples of the Arctic never had any idea of land ownership. The real masters of the tundra and forest-tundra are invisible creatures who do not overlook offenses and can dictate their own terms.

Among the features of Arctic folklore, white color can be noted as a symbol of death and evil. Having visited the far north, it is easy to understand why. The polar night hides the sun. The icy desert stretches in all directions in the wrong light of the moon and polar aurora. The frost burns, the blizzard howls. There is no other color despite white on the frozen ground covered with snow. Even in the dark snow is white.

The bulk of the disembodied population of the Arctic are the spirits of nature. Mountains, trees, and lakes often appear before us as animate beings. The patrons of the area interact with people either helping or harming, sometimes they make fun of it. Another group of Arctic spirits is made up of the embodiment of natural

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phenomena, for example, the «old woman-blizzard». Also, each nationality has their own understandings about the images of the clan, ancestors and natural patrons.

Common characters in fairy tales are animals that have always been near a person and played a big role in his life. Since ancient times, man has been looking closely at these creatures of nature that are so unlike himself, but also endowed with intelligence and personality. A man was surprised that animals, just like people, unite into collectives that have their own leaders. Based on such observations, the idea was formed that «animals are also people», that this is another special nationality. If they live with people under the same sky, on the same earth, then they have the same rights. In fairy tales animals and people have a dialogue on equal terms, visit and help each other.

The supreme heavenly deity among the Nenets, the demiurge Num, ruled the world with the help of other deities and spirits. His wife, I-nebya, Mother Earth, is an old patroness woman who gives birth to and preserves all living things. She protected the house, family and hearth. The antagonist of Num is Nga - incarnate evil,

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the spirit of the underworld, a deity that sends illness and death. Each lake, fishing tract had its own master spirits. Deer were sacrificed to them, offerings were made (pieces of cloth, coins, tobacco, etc.) so that the spirits would grant health, good luck in reindeer breeding and fishing. At sacred places, which could be stones, cliffs, groves, idols were placed in the form of humanoid figures. Larch was considered as a sacred tree.

Among the Nenets fairy tales there are texts about animals, magic, legendary and everyday ones. Often their characters are deities, spirits - the owners of the local lands. They are also the main characters in other genres of folklore - legends, prayers, shamanic songs.

The ethnic groups inhabiting the Arctic sometimes have similar, and sometimes completely different heroes of fairy tales and myths. Their diverse folklore can provide rich material for scientific ethnographic illustration.