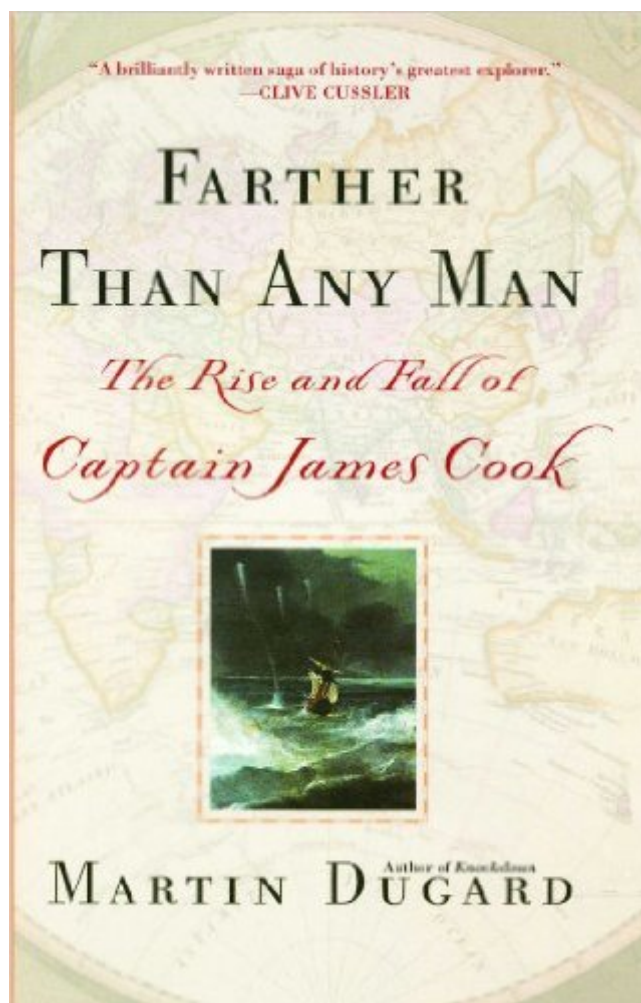


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Farther Than Any Man: The Rise And Fall Of Captain James Cook



Synopsis

In the annals of seafaring and exploration, there is one name that immediately evokes visions of the open ocean, billowing sails, visiting strange, exotic lands previously uncharted, and civilizations never before encountered -- Captain James Cook. This is the true story of a legendary man and explorer. Noted modern-day adventurer Martin Dugard, using James Cook's personal journals, strips away the myths surrounding Cook's life and portrays his tremendous ambition, intellect, and sheer hardheadedness to rise through the ranks of the Royal Navy -- and by his courageous exploits become one of the most enduring figures in naval history. Full of realistic action, lush descriptions of places and events, and fascinating historical characters such as King George III and the soon-to-be-notorious Master William Bligh, Dugard's gripping account of the life and death of Captain James Cook is a thrilling story of a discoverer hell-bent on going farther than any man.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dugard's account of the life of explorer James Cook is a light, easily read introduction to England's greatest explorer. Dugard stresses the travails of a man of humble beginnings who, through force of his own will and some fortuitous connections garnered command of the first solo expedition into the South Pacific. He describes Cook's early voyages on colliers, moving on to his decade-long exploration of the Newfoundland coasts. Lured away by the glories of the Royal Navy, Cook entered that force as a lowly seaman but rose rapidly to junior officer due to his cartography skills and forceful sense of drive. Dugard dubs Cook "the original adventurer." Other expeditions had

concentrated on map-ping coastlines along regularly used routes or finding harbours to serve as sanctuaries or supply bases. Cook's voyage in the Endeavour was the first journey dedicated to scientific studies. Cook's mandate was to convey a team of scientists to Tahiti. There they would study the rare phenomenon of Venus' transit across the face of the sun, adding to the navigator's store of tools. From that mid-Pacific isle, however, Cook was free to seek the legendary Southern Continent, particularly Antarctica. Given a mandate to wander the Pacific, Cook found yet another landmass, the island continent of Australia. Dugard portrays Cook as impelled by several ambitions. To become the premier explorer of the Pacific, to bask in the adoration of its peoples, and show Britain's class-bound society that the son of a farm labourer was the equal of any aristocrat. He achieved all these aims, but at the usual cost to a man overcome by hubris. He went too far, barely staving off mutiny by a crew that adored him. In the end, of course, an act of arrogance cost him his life in Hawaii.

.The publishers of this book suggest a genre classification of ADVENTURE/BIOGRAPHY. One thing is for sure; it is not a history book. It is, instead, a garbled, confused and at times, barely literate attempt at writing a psychodrama based on the life of that most famous of navigators, Captain James Cook. You would think an author who wants to write about voyages of discovery, and purports to have done his research by following his subject's tracks around the globe would have his basic geography under control. We have Dugard wandering around London (UK) not knowing what side of the Thames River he is on. He takes us on a walk from the Deptford Docks near Greenwich (on the south bank) to Cook's house in the East End of London, without crossing the river! He takes us along famous London thoroughfares like Regency (sic) Street and Savile (sic once again) Row. You would hope a book like this might have some useful maps. There is an attempt at one. Right up front of the book we get a chart of the world showing the tracks of the ships taken in Cook's three voyages. This map however is totally useless. The essence of Cook's peregrination around the Pacific saw him often crossing his paths and doubling back. The map in this book has tracks without arrows. You can't tell where he's come from or where he's going! Dugard's inventiveness really comes into its own when he attempts to go inside the head of Cook. He gives us the passionate details of his relationship with his wife Elizabeth. The fact that Mrs Cook burnt all her correspondence with her husband before she died, and the total lack of details in Cook's own records of his personal life is a real convenience for the imaginative author.

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