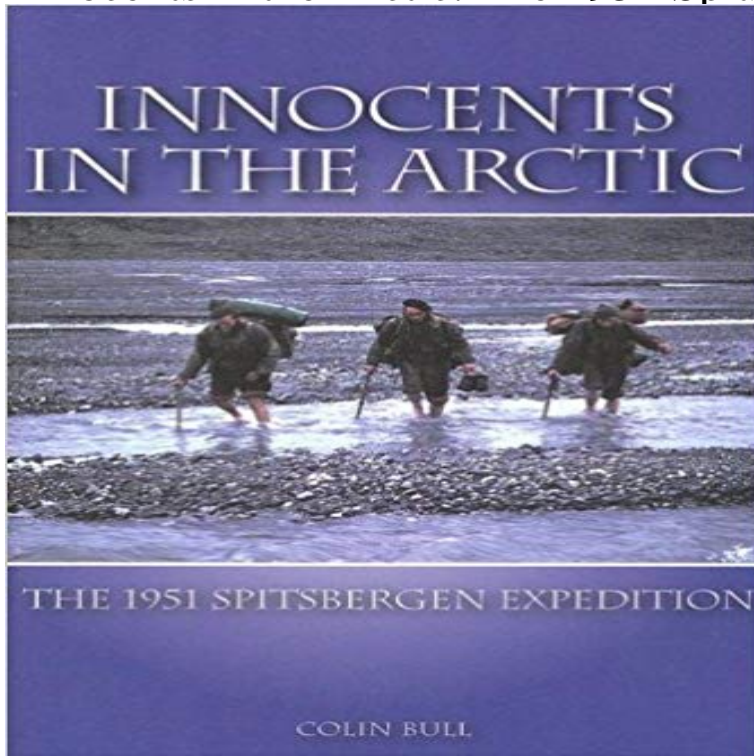


Innocents in the Arctic: The 1951 Spitsbergen Expedition



Driven by the desire for scientific discovery and adventure, ten naive young men ventured north to the nearly uninhabited, ice-covered island of Spitsbergen in 1951. Scientific progress ensued, but so did misfortunes wrought by calamitous weather, an unworthy ship, and an entertaining but ill-informed approach to arctic survival. *Innocents in the Arctic* chronicles this Birmingham University expedition with an absorbing combination of wit and historical insight. Compiled from diaries, scientific field notes, and the authors' memories, it documents an important period in polar exploration following the social upheaval of World War II. It also brings to life the labors of arctic travel before modern technology: the Birmingham researchers hauled their own sledge and communicated with hand-scrawled notes pinned to their leaky canvas tents. Despite these difficulties, the expedition was a scientific success and helped to unravel a geological puzzle--why were relatively recent fossils entombed within rocks that were twice as old? The answers to this question and others contributed to an understanding of the evolution of the North Atlantic. The members of the Spitsbergen Expedition saw themselves as fallible and human, and their struggles create a compelling alternative to traditional polar heroism. Bull's realistic, insider story of scientific adventure will appeal to polar enthusiasts, armchair historians, and anyone who remembers what it was like to be young and daring.

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