

In the Kingdom of Ice: The Grand and Terrible Polar Voyage of the USS Jeannette

New York Times bestselling author Hampton Sides returns with a white-knuckle tale of polar exploration and survival in the Gilded Age. In the late nineteenth century, people were obsessed by one of the last unmapped areas of the globe: the North Pole. No one knew what existed beyond the fortress of ice rimming the northern oceans, although theories abounded. The foremost cartographer in the world, a German named August Petermann, believed that warm currents sustained a verdant island at the top of the world. National glory would fall to whoever could plant his flag upon its shores. James Gordon Bennett, the eccentric and stupendously wealthy owner of The New York Herald, had recently captured the world's attention by dispatching Stanley to Africa to find Dr. Livingstone. Now he was keen to re-create that sensation on an even more epic scale. So he funded an official U.S. naval expedition to reach the Pole, choosing as its captain a young officer named George Washington De Long, who had gained fame for a rescue operation off the coast of Greenland. De Long led a team of 32 men deep into uncharted Arctic waters, carrying the aspirations of a young country burning to become a world power. On July 8, 1879, the USS Jeannette set sail from San Francisco to cheering crowds in the grip of "Arctic Fever." The ship sailed into uncharted seas, but soon was trapped in pack ice. Two years into the harrowing voyage, the hull was breached. Amid the rush of water and the shrieks of breaking wooden boards, the crew abandoned the ship. Less than an hour later, the Jeannette sank to the bottom, and the men found themselves marooned a thousand miles north of Siberia with only the barest supplies. Thus began their long march across the endless ice—a frozen hell in the most lonesome corner of the world. Facing everything from snow blindness and polar bears to ferocious storms and frosty labyrinths, the expedition battled madness and starvation as they desperately strove for survival. With twists and turns worthy of a thriller, *In The Kingdom of Ice* is a spellbinding tale of heroism and determination in the most unforgiving territory on Earth. ...more

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