



Unknown Shore: The Lost History of England's Arctic Colony

Robert Ruby

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The true story of how the first English colony in the New World was lost to history, then found again three hundred years later.

England's first attempt at colonizing the New World was not at Roanoke or Jamestown, but on a mostly frozen small island in the Canadian Arctic. Queen Elizabeth I called that place *Meta Incognita* -- the Unknown Shore. Backed by Elizabeth I and her key advisors, including the legendary spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham and the shadowy Dr. John Dee, the erstwhile pirate Sir Martin Frobisher set out three times across the North Atlantic, in the process leading what is still the largest Arctic expedition in history. In this forbidding place, Frobisher believed he had discovered vast quantities of gold, the fabled Northwest Passage to the riches of Cathay, and a suitable place for a year-round colony. But Frobisher's dream turned into a nightmare, and his colony was lost to history for nearly three centuries.

In this brilliantly conceived dual narrative, Robert Ruby interweaves Frobisher's saga with that of the nineteenth-century American Charles Francis Hall, whose explorations of this same landscape enabled him to hear the oral history of the Inuit, passed down through generations. It was these stories that unlocked the mystery of Frobisher's lost colony.

Unknown Shore is the story of two men's travels, and of what these men shared three centuries apart. Ultimately, it is a tale of men driven by greed and ambition, of the hard labor of exploration, of the Inuit and their land, and of great gambles gone wrong.

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