



The Life of Captain James Cook

J. Beaglehole

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Captain Cook is the greatest explorer-seaman of all time, yet the world has had to wait almost two centuries for the first full-scale biography to do justice to the man and his achievements. Professor J.C. Beaglehole, the leading authority on Pacific exploration, devoted himself for many years to the editing of Cook's copious Journals, a monument of scholarship in four massive volumes, and the Journal of Joseph Banks who accompanied Cook in the *Endeavor*. The Journals completed, Beaglehole turn to writing as the crown of his life's work this biography of Cook, which was completed but for a final checking when he died.

This is not merely a chronological account of events in Cook's life but a deeply revealing study of the growth of a complex character, stubborn and passionate yet patient and judicious, seen in his actions as an unrivalled navigator and explorer and as a commander of men. Those who influenced Cook from childhood up, and those who sailed with him on his voyages, are as clearly and surely drawn as the man himself. The author's first-hand knowledge of the Pacific Islands and the coasts of New Zealand and Australia give a warmth and actuality to the narrative, while his impeccable scholarship and skill in handling the mass of documentary material, his wit, and his elegant literary style, confirm the expectation that this is one of the great historical biographies.

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