



Back cover blurb

In the unforgiving Arctic of 1885, the U.S.S. Boreas embarks on a perilous journey to claim the North Pole, but what begins as a quest for glory becomes a battle for survival.

Trapped in a frozen wasteland, the crew faces an enemy more terrifying than the relentless ice. As their ship succumbs to the crushing grip of the Arctic, a malevolent force haunts their every step, driving men to madness and death.

Captain Jacob Sinclair and his officers cling to science and reason, dismissing the superstitious warnings of the Inuit hunters. But as the crew is picked off one by one, they must confront the chilling truth: they are not alone. Something sinister lurks within the ice, an immortal presence that seeks to claim their souls.

In a desperate race against time and plummeting temperatures, the survivors must band together to unravel the mystery of the Arctic's dark secret before they, too, become prey to the relentless pursuit of timeless evil.

Some secrets are best left undiscovered.

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Whispers in the Ice  
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## *Preface*

*From the time the first humans walked out of Africa and spread across the globe, our species has been driven to explore and expand into new territories, discover and lay claim to new resources, and learn and understand as much as possible about our world and our place in it.*

*In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, a period marked by scientific voyages and discoveries, James Cook became a household name worldwide for his expeditions in the Pacific Ocean. Meanwhile, in 1792-93, Scotsman Alexander Mackenzie achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first European to cross the entire North American continent north of Mexico, traversing Canada. These historical events set the stage for the next chapter in human exploration-the Arctic expeditions.*

*By the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the quest for knowledge of our world was reaching a fever pitch, with each new success further fueling the ambitions of explorers and scientists to discover and catalog the natural world and claim their own place in the pages of human history.*

*Explorers made groundbreaking discoveries in Africa, Asia, and North and South America, opening new trade routes and expanding the influence of developed nations—for both good and bad. But it was the frozen and inhospitable polar regions that truly captured the imagination. Dozens of ships and crews set out to discover a navigable northwest ocean passage to the Pacific or be the first to reach the North Pole. These expeditions were not just about conquering new lands but about pushing the boundaries of human knowledge and understanding, and perhaps, encountering something beyond our wildest dreams...*

*As explorers ventured into these new lands, they encountered a native population that had existed in harmony with nature long before Europeans and Americans set their sights on the north. Yet, while expanding our world's written knowledge, these polar expeditions came at a great cost. The extreme cold and unrelenting ice often proved to be formidable adversaries, overpowering even the hardest individuals and the best-built ships of their day. Many brave souls willingly left the safety and security of their homes, only to face the frozen wastelands, a harsh reality that claimed many lives.*

*Though a complete work of fiction, the story that unfolds on the following pages is a testament to the unwavering courage of humanity. It takes inspiration from the true tales of the many brave souls who risked everything and often paid the ultimate price for this knowledge. Their bravery, in the face of such harsh conditions is a beacon of inspiration for us all.*

*Humans often find out too late that Mother Nature is not to be trifled with, and she doesn't give up her secrets easily.*



Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time

-----Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807-1882

Listen, stranger! Mist and snow,  
And it grew wondrous cold:

And ice mast-high came floating by,  
As green as emerald.  
And through the drifts the snowy clifts  
Did send a dismal sheen:  
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken--  
The ice was all between.  
The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around:  
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
Like noises in a swound!

-----*Samuel Taylor Coleridge - 1772 –1834*

“I look at the Arctic explorations in the general interest of science. All expeditions raise new questions. The more we see, the more we want to see and know. Success is only relative.”

----- *August Petermann, German Cartographer - 1822-1878*

## *The Ijiraat*

Tulugaak meticulously examined his rifle as he pursued the trail of vivid red droplets across the vast expanse of white ice. He could see nothing wrong with the barrel or sights—yet he had hunted with it for years and rarely missed making a clean kill. His expertise told him the wounded seal wouldn't stray far, given the considerable blood loss. The animal was large and fat and would provide meat and clothing for his small family. Ili's time was close now, and the sealskin would make a fine coat and boots for their new baby. Tulugaak loved Pinga and Yura with all his heart, but he hoped so much that Ili would give him a son this time.

The seal was still bleeding steadily, and despite the relentless onslaught of wind and snow, Tulugaak had no trouble tracking it. He shielded his eyes against the increasing wind and peered ahead, hoping at any moment he would find the animal had succumbed to its injury. He knew he must find it before it reached open water and disappeared. Otherwise, the seal would die, and Tulugaak would be robbed of the precious meat he needed to feed his wife and daughters. This winter had been terrible, and he could not hunt for long periods because of the strong winds and deep, drifting snow and ice. Aside from a few fish, their meager food supplies dwindled perilously low—and the spring thaw was still weeks away. He'd taken his kayak and traveled many miles further south and west than usual, hoping to find more abundant game.

The wind intensified, lashing at his senses and stinging Tulugaak's eyes, making them water. He strained to focus in the perpetual twilight of the Arctic winter. He began to walk faster, fearing the wind would obscure the blood trail or the seal would find an opening in the ice and slip away. The wind grew colder and came at him head-on. Tulugaak pushed ahead. With his left arm across his face to shield his eyes from the biting needles propelled by the gusts, he leaned into the gale and trudged across the broken, uneven surface of the pack ice. He could no longer see the seal's blood, but it didn't matter. He saw its large, motionless shape lying prone on the ice a few hundred feet ahead. Tulugaak whispered a brief thanks and moved to skin and butcher the seal.

Approaching the figure, anticipation turned to disbelief as he realized it was not the seal he had been tracking, but a woman wearing a sealskin coat. She lay on her stomach, unmoving, with her face obscured by long, jet-black hair. Tulugaak looked around, but the wind was whipping about him, and

he could only see a few yards in any direction. He didn't see or hear anyone else nearby. Then an awful thought occurred to him—could he have shot this woman, thinking she was a seal?

Tulugaak gently rolled the woman over and was relieved to see no wounds—no blood on her coat or the ice beneath her. He brushed her hair aside and froze when he saw his wife's face.

"Ili?! Ili! What are you doing out here? Where are the girls?"

Ili's eyes remained closed, and she didn't appear to hear him. He pulled her close to him and leaned in to see if she was still breathing, not knowing how he could go on if she were not. He was miles from their home and had traveled by kayak to reach this ice floe. How could his wife be here? Tulugaak's head was spinning, and his heart pounded in his chest. He was sweating even with the frigid wind that swirled about him as he cradled his wife. After what felt like hours, Ili's eyes fluttered open and looked at him.

"Tulugaak, stay here with me. Don't leave me alone on the ice."

Tulugaak recoiled from the woman in his arms. Her voice was not Ili's voice. Ili's voice was sweet when she spoke, almost like someone singing. This creature's voice sounded like the shrieks and groans of ice grinding against itself.

Her eyes were not Ili's eyes. Ili's eyes were so dark they were nearly black. When Tulugaak looked into his wife's eyes, he saw everything good that had happened in his life. This creature fixed him with a cold, emotionless stare with eyes the color of old ice—blue and hard.

Too late, his grandmother's warning about the Ijiraat—evil shape-shifters that lure the unsuspecting to their doom—echoed in his mind. As a young boy, he'd dismissed the tales as legends passed down from the Old Ones. With horror gripping his soul, he recoiled from the imposter, his every instinct urging him to flee. Tulugaak pushed the woman in his arms away and turned, scrambling on his hands and knees, trying to put as much distance between them as possible.

"Ijiraat!" he cried out. "Ijiraat!"

Suddenly, the ice shifted and Tulugaak broke through, plunging into the freezing water below. Frantically, he grasped at the edges of the ice, trying to find some purchase by which he could pull himself out. He felt the biting cold of the water filling his boots and seeping through his coat,

stealing his body heat and weighing him down further. The not-Ili creature stood on the ledge above, watching him with soulless eyes.

“Please,” Tulugaak cried, “I have a family. My son needs me.”

He fought to stay afloat, but eventually, his strength gave out, and he slipped beneath the surface.

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With a heavy heart, Ili tended the flickering embers and added more of their dwindling fuel to the small fire. Pinga and Yura slept, having eaten the last of their food. The baby in her belly stirred and kicked. Tulugaak had been gone for twelve days, taking their only kayak.

Ili knew something terrible had happened to her husband. She’d had the same dream every night for the past week—she saw Tulugaak trapped just below the ice, whispering her name.

## **Part 1 - The Call of the North**

### ***All I Ask is a Tall Ship...***

Captain Jacob Sinclair stood at the docks at Boston's McKay shipyard, accompanied by Horace Platt, a representative from the *New-York Tribune* newspaper. To a casual observer, the two men were as different from each other as they could be. Sinclair stood a full six-feet-three-inches, neatly dressed in his dark blue Navy coat with highly polished buttons. His jet-black hair, full beard, and large frame presented an imposing image. Platt was five-foot-ten, shabbily dressed, and portly. He wore a cheap gray suit showing signs of wear at the cuffs and elbows, and his heavily scuffed brown shoes were severely in need of a shine. Though not yet fifty, Platt had begun to gray at the temples, and his scruffy beard was nearly all white. He wore thick, rounded spectacles that gave him a curious owl-like countenance.

The two men had come to inspect the final refitting of the *Quahog*, a two-hundred-twenty-foot steamer recently purchased from the United States Navy. The recently decommissioned ship was built for the Navy near the end of the Civil War and saw extensive service in the North Atlantic. The *Quahog* was a double-hulled ship, but such precautions alone had not saved similar vessels from the crushing ice north of Greenland. Her new owner and head of the *New-York Tribune*, Whitelaw Reid, had contracted with the McKay shipyard to ready the vessel for an arctic expedition that Sinclair would command. McKay's engineers had reinforced the ship's bracings with additional timbers, and the workmen were in the final stages of plating the hull in steel sheets extending six feet above and below the waterline.

"The work is coming along nicely, I think," said Platt. "I hear they are on schedule to finish by week's end."

Captain Sinclair, his gaze fixed on the workers pounding hot rivets into the steel plates, remained silent. The *Quahog*—soon to be rechristened the *Boreas*—symbolized his ambition for the success of the upcoming expedition. He had high expectations, and the workers knew it. Finally, breaking the silence, he muttered, "They had better, or there will be hell to pay." His words hung in the air, a stark reminder of the stakes at hand.



Sinclair was still bitter that Congress had refused his petition to appropriate funding for his expedition. After the expensive loss of the *Polaris*, they felt that private enterprise was better suited to finance polar exploration. He'd had to accept an offer from Whitelaw Reid's newspaper to provide the money he needed—or risk another explorer reaching the pole before him. Reid, to his credit, had lobbied his connections in Congress to have the Navy oversee the expedition and allow Sinclair to retain his commission as its captain.

Reid also insisted on exclusive story rights and was sending Platt along to document Sinclair's push to the North Pole.

This arrangement was by no means a novelty. James Bennett Jr., the publisher of Reid's leading rival newspaper, the *New York Herald*, had orchestrated a similar arrangement several years earlier with the ill-fated *Jennette* expedition under George De Long. Congress had been all too happy to declare De Long's voyage an American enterprise—with the strict stipulation that Bennett would incur all the costs associated with outfitting the ship with all the necessary provisions. Bennett, aware of the public's insatiable appetite for sensational news stories, realized that sponsoring De Long's voyage would be a surefire way to attract new readers and sell more newspapers.

Despite any misgivings he may have had about his deal with Reid, Sinclair's desire to be the first person to reach the North Pole was all-consuming. He would likely have given his soul to realize this intense desire, a prize that had eluded many and cost numerous lives.

His infatuation with the Arctic began as a young officer on the United States Revenue Cutter, *Thomas Corwin*. He embarked on several missions to Alaska and the Bering Sea, and his fascination with the Arctic deepened with each trip. Sinclair developed a profound connection with the quiet, otherworldly landscape and the mystical nature of the Northern Lights. The renowned naturalist John Muir joined the ship's complement on Sinclair's second voyage, and they landed a small contingent on an unexplored island to conduct scientific research. The fur-clad Inuit hunting seals on the nearby ice watched them with great interest, and Sinclair found them to be friendly and good-spirited people.

Whenever his ship returned to San Francisco, Sinclair spent several days lost in a melancholic fog, dreaming of returning to the Arctic. His final voyage north aboard the *Corwin* was in the summer of 1881. The effect his time in the Arctic had on Sinclair is evident in his journals:

*October 30, 1881*

*It pains my heart to scribble these lines, for they mark my last departure from the Arctic's embrace. Another winter is upon us, and the ice has begun to retake the open water. A sorrow grips my soul as we bid her farewell. With her wild winds and endless expanses of ice, the North tugs at my very being, pulling me back to her frigid bosom.*

*How I long to linger amidst the stark beauty of this unclaimed land, where the sun scarcely deigns to cast its feeble light. The Arctic truly holds me in a spell, stirring within me a primal longing for adventure and discovery.*

*Yet duty calls, and I must bid my farewell to this icy paradise. As we chart our course southward towards the warmth of San Francisco's bustling streets, my heart already grows heavy with longing. For it is not the comforts of home that I crave but the untamed wilderness of the North.*

*I shall yearn for the crisp bite of Arctic air, the peaceful silence of a world blanketed in snow, and the endless expanse of ice stretching out to the horizon. With each return to San Francisco amidst the noise and clamor of civilization, I feel like a stranger in a foreign land, forever haunted by memories of the Arctic's icy embrace.*

*Perhaps, someday, fate shall smile upon me, and I shall again heed the call of the North, returning to the land that holds my heart in thrall. Until then, I shall carry the memory of the Arctic with me, a beacon of hope in the darkest of nights, guiding me ever onward toward what I feel is my true home.*

When Captain Hooper announced his desire to leave the service, Sinclair hoped the Navy would reward his loyalty with command of the *Corwin*. Instead, that distinction fell to Hooper's first officer, Michael Healy. Dejected, Sinclair requested a transfer, and the Navy assigned him to a gunship

patrolling the waters from the Gulf of Mexico to islands in the Caribbean, far from his beloved North.

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As Captain De Long and six of the others who perished on the *Jeannette* expedition were finally being laid to rest in the Bronx, Doctor Stephen Wainright was already on board an eastbound train for New York. Sinclair's telegram had reached him in San Francisco two days earlier, and he wasted no time settling his affairs and packing his meager belongings. De Long's failure to reach the pole opened the way for another expedition to claim that prize, and Sinclair intended it to be him.

Stephen Wainright met Jacob Sinclair years earlier when both men were based in San Francisco. After a recent voyage north, Sinclair complained of fatigue and soreness in his extremities. Wainright treated him for Vitamin C deficiency, and he soon improved. The two men became close friends and stayed in contact even after Sinclair left for the Caribbean. Sinclair's romantic tales of the Arctic enthralled Wainright. In his seven years as a Navy surgeon, Wainright had only served aboard two ships, and neither for longer than a year. When Sinclair requested he travel to New York to sail north with the *Boreas*, he wasted no time accepting.

Wainright harbored no apprehension about traveling to the Arctic, but neither was he oblivious to the dangers involved. Twenty of *Jeannette's* crew, including the ship's doctor, had perished, having never achieved their goal. The thirteen survivors were still recovering nearly a year after returning to the United States. Despite this, Wainright saw a chance to be a part of a momentous journey to show the world what the American spirit could do.

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"But I don't want you to go."

Ellen Wilcott knew Albert's new assignment was an excellent opportunity for a young Navy officer, and she also knew what it meant to be a Navy wife. Her own father had been away for much of her childhood and adolescence, leaving her mother to raise seven children alone, sometimes for many months at a time. Still, she had the oddest sense that if she let her husband follow Sinclair to the Arctic, she would never see him again.

“Darling, we’ve been over this,” Albert said in that calm, patient, and gentle way that had made Ellen fall in love with him. “I’m to be promoted to Second Officer on the *Boreas*, and Captain Sinclair has promised I shall lead a sledge crew when we push to the pole. Imagine, you may find yourself married to the first man to raise the American flag above the North Pole.”

“Or I may find myself a widow,” Ellen said.

“I have no desire to become a name on a memorial plaque, nor will I foolishly place my safety at risk for fame and glory. However, it is a certainty that someone will be the first to reach the pole, and I firmly believe it should be an American. The nations of the Old World have had a full measure of the discoveries in Africa and the South Pacific. It is only fitting that our young America’s Navy should pave the way to the top of the globe. *Fortes inquit fortuna iuvat*, remember? Fortune favors the brave.”

Albert took Ellen in his arms and kissed her. She sighed and held him tightly, knowing she would soon have to let him go.

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On the morning of the twenty-ninth of May, the newly assembled crew of the *Boreas* busied themselves, loading provisions into the ship's hold and readying her to sail the following day. From the forecabin, Captain Sinclair watched the activity with great interest. He had hand-picked this group of men to be his crew, a luxury not afforded to most Captains in the Navy. In Sinclair’s case, it was vital to the mission's success. If they were to reach the pole, it would require every man to perform to the best of his ability under extreme and adverse conditions. There was no room on the *Boreas* for layabouts or shirkers.

Several seamen were helping Mr. Pearce, the ship’s carpenter, shift a load of lumber below deck. Sinclair knew Calvin Pearce well and had recently served aboard the *Lancaster* with him. Having Captain Klein release Pearce for this voyage had taken some negotiating. Pearce was diligent and did fine work. When the *Lancaster* suffered extensive damage in a heavy storm near Cuba, Pearce worked long hours repairing the bowsprit and mizzen mast. If not for his skill, the ship would have been forced to return to port in Florida for weeks of repair and refitting.

“Watch out!”

A loud crash near the stern caught Sinclair's attention. A crate of tinned meats had slipped from the cargo hoist, damaged the deck planking, and spilled its contents across the deck.

"Clumsy oaf, I'll tan your hide for that!" the ship's first officer, Mathias Grieg, yelled at the crane operator. His face was flushed with rage as he headed toward the gangway.

"Was anyone hurt, Mr. Grieg?" the captain called out.

Grieg stopped in his tracks and turned to face his captain.

"I don't believe so, Sir, but the provisions may be damaged because of that man's incompetence."

"Regardless, what is done is done. I suggest you assign a seaman to clean up the crate and its contents and assess the damage. I'll want any compromised tins replaced before we sail tomorrow. We have no time to waste on pointless reprisals when preparing the ship is of the utmost importance."

Grieg nodded, his anger forgotten.

"Yes, Captain. I'll see to it." He turned and gestured to the nearest sailor, and the two moved back toward the spilled container.

Sinclair watched him for some time, wondering if Grieg's outburst had been the result of the pressure they were all under to sail on time or if it was his nature to be easily riled.

Sinclair had no first-hand experience with Grieg, though his first officer came highly recommended and his service record was exemplary. A trusted friend had served with Grieg for several years in the North Atlantic and spoke highly of the young lieutenant. Sinclair met Mathias Grieg in New York in early March, and the two had a lengthy conversation about Sinclair's plans to reach the pole. Grieg was young, fit, and well-spoken. His uniform was neat, and his face clean-shaven. Aside from his ginger hair, Sinclair sensed some of his younger self in this man. When Grieg eagerly expressed his desire to join the expedition, Sinclair—who considered himself a fine judge of character—knew he'd found his second in command.

Sinclair decided to ignore the younger man's recent outburst, chalking it up to the strain.

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Final preparations for the expedition continued well into the evening, and the sun had set before the last of the supplies were secured in the *Boreas*' hold. When the work was finished, Sinclair gathered his crew on the dock and admonished them to get one last good night of rest before their early departure tomorrow. The seamen broke into smaller groups, laughing and joking as they began to drift toward town.

“Are you sure that’s wise, Captain?”

Whitelaw Reid climbed the gangway and stepped onto the ship’s deck after the last of the sailors had departed. Though Sinclair was in full command of the expedition, Reid never missed an opportunity to remind him who signed the checks. He approached the Captain, then turned to watch as the last of the crew moved out of sight.

“I’ve not known very many sailors who didn’t like their drink,” he said. “Isn’t it customary to sequester the crew on board when you have an early morning departure?”

“Mr. Reid, I have personally selected each and every man in this crew. They are as committed to the expedition as I, and they’ll not betray my trust.”

Captain Sinclair lowered his voice.

“Besides, we leave tomorrow for what may well be two very difficult years in unforgiving conditions. There is every possibility that some of these men may not return. The least I can do is allow them one last night ashore to say their goodbyes.”

Reid nodded but said nothing.

After several minutes of silence, he turned toward Sinclair.

“I’ve received word that Peter Johansson will meet you in Upernavik when you arrive. He has three Inuit natives who know the northwestern coast well and have agreed to hunt for the expedition. You can load their sleds and dog teams when you meet up with the *Triumph*.”

Reid contracted with the *Triumph's* owner, a British merchant, to act as a support vessel for the first leg of the journey from Greenland.

“She’ll have 165 tons of coal to replenish your bunkers for the push north—and additional pork, beef, lamb, and caribou meat for the ship’s larder.”

Sinclair thanked Reid awkwardly, then made his excuses to retire before the long voyage that was to commence the following morning.

“No final goodbyes ashore for you, Captain?” Reid said with a slight grin.

“I’ve no ties on land,” said Sinclair. “I never have. I’ll be happy when we cast off and put some distance between us and the noise and smell of civilization.”

With that, he turned toward his cabin.

Reid watched him as he walked away, wondering what it must be like to feel so alone and isolated in a city as large as New York.

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The following morning, the thirtieth of May 1885, a throng of well-wishers gathered at the pier to see the *Boreas* off on her auspicious journey. Whitelaw Reid arranged for members of the popular 7th Regiment Brass Band to play, and they regaled the crowd with renditions of “Columbia Forever” and “The Star Spangled Banner”.

The Mayor and several other high-ranking members of New York society—including Reid—sat in a row of chairs on a raised platform erected alongside the ship. As the band finished playing, Reid stepped to a podium at the front of the dais. The boisterous crowd quieted, waiting to hear what he had to say.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed friends and well-wishers,

On this fine morning, we gather here not merely as spectators but as partakers in a grand enterprise of human courage and the unyielding American spirit. We come to bid farewell to the noble vessel *Boreas*, named for the Greek god of ice, snow, and the north wind, with her sails full of hope and her hull imbued with the resolve of all who have toiled to prepare her for this most ambitious of journeys.

“She is not merely a ship; she is a beacon of our collective aspiration to push beyond the confines of the known world and explore the vast, icy expanses of the Arctic. We are on the cusp of a new era in human history, seeking to broaden the horizon of human knowledge and experience. As we bid our seafarers farewell, let us also remember the fortitude of those who dare to venture where few have dared before.

“Captain Jacob Sinclair and his brave, steadfast crew embark not only with provisions and instruments but with the hearts and prayers of all who stand upon these shores. Their courage is a testament to the indomitable spirit that defines us. Knowing that the next two years will be marked by triumphs as well as trials, we wish Godspeed to our intrepid explorers. May they return to us safely from their incredible odyssey, having firmly planted the Stars and Stripes at the very top of the globe as a symbol to the world of American daring and fortitude.

“Farewell, dear friends, and may the winds be ever in your favor!”

A great roar went up from the gathered spectators as the band struck up another rousing song. The *USS Intrepid*, moored nearby in the harbor, fired her guns in salute. Sinclair gave the word to cast away lines and stoke the steam boilers. Some in the crowd waved American flags, others waved their hats or scarves.

The *Boreas* turned away from her anchorage and gave two loud blasts from her steam whistle as a farewell to New York City—and America.

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WIP SECTION

Journal excerpts ideas

The Arctic summer has bestowed upon us a deceptive calm, with endless days of sunlight that seem to stretch to eternity. It is a time when the ice loosens its grip, granting us access to previously impenetrable northern reaches. Captain Sinclair remains resolute in his quest for discovery, and we continue our expedition, driven by the allure of uncharted lands.

The endless daylight plays tricks upon our senses, casting long shadows that dance upon the ice. During the nights that never truly come, eerie phenomena have begun to plague our camp. Strange, unnatural lights illuminate the sky, shimmering like ethereal spirits beckoning us further into the frozen abyss.

These northern lights, as we initially called them, were at first a source of wonder, but now they have taken on a sinister quality. They seem to follow us, swirling and shifting, as if guided by some malevolent force. The crew's unease is palpable, and even Captain Sinclair's steely resolve has begun to waver.

The supernatural presence that stalks us has grown more tangible, more menacing, as we push deeper into the Arctic wilderness. Last night, as I stood watch over our camp, I saw it again, the shadowy figure wreathed in mist. It was closer this time, and its laughter, icy and malicious, echoed through the stillness.

The men gathered around the campfire, their faces drawn with fear, and Captain Sinclair gave orders to arm ourselves. But when we approached the figure, it melted away like mist, leaving us with nothing but a bone-chilling sense of dread.

Desperation has taken hold of our expedition. Each day, we press further north, haunted by the relentless pursuit of the supernatural entity that torments us. It invades our dreams, whispering malevolent secrets and sowing discord among us.

Lieutenant MacIntyre's fate has befallen another, and this time, it is our trusted navigator, Mr. Turner, who has succumbed to madness. Like MacIntyre's journal, Mr. Turner's is filled with cryptic messages and the word "Vengeance" written in blood-red ink.

Captain Sinclair's obsession with uncovering the truth behind this supernatural menace has become all-consuming. He now speaks of making a final, desperate push into the

heart of the Arctic, convinced that the answers we seek lie there. I fear that our expedition is spiraling toward a nightmarish conclusion and that we are mere pawns in a malevolent game played by forces beyond our understanding. May God have mercy on our souls, for we are surely in the grip of something not of this world.

[The journal entries end abruptly at this point, the ink smudged and the pages tattered, as if the author had been interrupted in haste. The eerie, unnatural laughter still echoes in the wind, a chilling reminder of the horrors that befell this ill-fated polar expedition.]

#### Back cover blurb

In the unforgiving Arctic of 1885, the U.S.S. Boreas embarks on a perilous journey to claim the North Pole, but what begins as a quest for glory becomes a battle for survival.

Trapped in a frozen wasteland, the crew faces an enemy more terrifying than the relentless ice. As their ship succumbs to the crushing grip of the Arctic, a malevolent force haunts their every step, driving men to madness and death.

Captain Jacob Sinclair and his officers cling to science and reason, dismissing the superstitious warnings of the Inuit hunters. But as the crew is picked off one by one, they must confront the chilling truth: they are not alone. Something sinister lurks within the ice, an immortal presence that seeks to claim their souls.

In a desperate race against time and plummeting temperatures, the survivors must band together to unravel the mystery of the Arctic's dark secret before they, too, become prey to the relentless pursuit of timeless evil.

Some secrets are best left undiscovered.