



Brutal Journey: The Epic Story of the First Crossing of North America

Paul Schneider

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A gripping account of four explorers adrift in an unknown land and the harrowing journey that took them across North America 270 years before Lewis and Clark

One part *Heart of Darkness*, one part Lewis and Clark, *Brutal Journey* tells the story of a group of explorers who came to the new world on the heels of Cortés; bound for glory, only four of four hundred would survive. Eight years and some five thousand miles later, three Spaniards and a black Moroccan wandered out of the wilderness to the north of the Rio Grande and into Cortes' gold-drenched Mexico.

The four survivors of the Narváez expedition brought nothing back from their sojourn other than their story, but what a tale it was. They had become killers and cannibals, torturers and torture victims, slavers and enslaved. They became faith healers, arms dealers, canoe thieves, spider eaters, and finally, when there were only the four of them left in the high Texas desert, they became itinerate messiahs. They became, in other words, whatever it took to stay alive long enough to inch their way toward Mexico, the only place where they were certain they would find an outpost of the Spanish empire.

The journey of the Cabeza De Vaca expedition is one of the greatest survival epics in the history of American exploration. By drawing on the accounts of the first explorers and the most recent findings of archaeologists and academic historians, Paul Schneider offers a thrilling and authentic narrative to replace a legend of North American exploration.

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