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Compass: A Story of Exploration and Innovation

Alan Gurney

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From the time man first took to the seas until only one thousand years ago, sight and winds were the sailor's only navigational aids. It was not until the development of the compass that maps and charts could be used with any accuracy-even so, it would be hundreds of years and thousands of shipwrecks before the marvellous instrument was perfected. Its history up to modern times is filled with the stories of disasters that befell sailors who misused it. In fascinating detail, Alan Gurney brings to life the story of the perfection of the essential navigational device-the instrument Victor Hugo called "the soul of the ship".

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