

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

GARY
COLLINS



THE LAST
BEOTHUK

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PRAISE FOR GARY COLLINS

Cabot Island

“Collins’ focus on an ordinary event taking place under extraordinary circumstances sheds a tender, respectful light on how strength of character can be forged at the anguished intersection of isolation and bereavement.”

DOWNHOME

“The story is intriguing . . .”

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

The Last Farewell

“The writing here is at its best when the danger and beauty of the sea is subtly described.”

ATLANTIC BOOKS TODAY

“*The Last Farewell* tells a true story, but Collins’ vivid description and well-realized characters make it read like a novel.” — THE CHRONICLE HERALD

“Read *The Last Farewell* not only because it is a moving historical tale of needless tragedy but also because it’s a book enriched with abundant details of Newfoundland life not so widespread anymore.” — THE PILOT

“[*The Last Farewell*] is informative and intriguing, and not merely for experienced sailors or Newfoundlanders.”

— THE NORTHERN MARINER

What Colour is the Ocean?

“Delightful rhyming story.”

RESOURCE LINKS

“Scott Keating’s illustrations are an asset to the book. The double page illustrations revealing the colour of the ocean are particularly successful in conveying the moods of the ocean and the land.”

CM: CANADIAN REVIEW OF MATERIALS

“This tale, set by the sea in Newfoundland, is told in a simple repetitive refrain that will capture the imagination of young readers. . . . Illustrations by Scott Keating, award-winning artist and illustrator, capture the beauty of Newfoundland and the many seasons and moods of the ocean.” — ATLANTIC BOOKS TODAY

Soulis Joe’s Lost Mine

“There is a magic in the interior of this island that few will write about or speak of to others—an endless fascination with the land. Gary Collins is entranced in the same way that the allure of rock, tree, and bog seized the indomitable Allan Keats, and before him, his ancestor, the Mi’kmaq Soulis Joe. This book gives voice not only to these men but to the great and wonderful wilderness of Newfoundland. Read it and be prepared for the wonder and love of the wild places. It will grab and hold on to you, too.”

J.A. RICKETTS, AUTHOR OF *THE BADGER RIOT*

“Soulis Joe’s Lost Mine is a number of stories in one: it’s a great mystery-adventure; it’s a fascinating look at prospecting for precious metals; and it’s a heart-warming story about the importance of family pride.”

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

“This tale also serves to cement Collins’ status as one of the region’s better storytellers; he has a journalist’s eye for detail, his writing is crisp and lean and the narrative arc runs smooth and seamless and is well-peppered with shakes of home-spun humour.”

ATLANTIC BOOKS TODAY

Where Eagles Lie Fallen

“Some truly breathtaking stories of tragedy . . .”

THE NORTHEAST AVALON TIMES

“A gripping story,
which cuts to the true heart of tragedy.”

DOWNHOME

Mattie Mitchell: Newfoundland’s Greatest Frontiersman

“[Gary Collins] weaves the various threads of the story into a marvellous yarn—all the more marvellous because it is true.”

THE NORTHEAST AVALON TIMES

A Day on the Ridge

“The 22 pieces in [*A Day on the Ridge*] vary considerably: a serious accident to a man canoeing with a friend down a remote and dangerous river; the life and death of a big bull moose; coming home from the woods for Christmas; the New Year’s Day Orange Parade and getting caught in an otter trap—and escaping from it. Every one of these pieces is exciting and well worth reading; each is well-written, too. This may be Collins’ best book, though his other six rank high, too.” — THE PEI GUARDIAN

The Gale of 1929

“This book is gripping . . .”

THE PEI GUARDIAN

“Not unlike the seasoned schoonermen battling the famous gale, Collins manages to navigate his way around each story as seen through the eyes of the characters involved. It may be that I, myself, had an affinity for the characters, having been through a similar situation on a 115-foot schooner. But, it felt to me like Collins took me up and down each wave, and let me inside each heroic task of survival.”

ARTS EAST

Left to Die

“Gary Collins has written a powerful, gut-wrenching book that, at least, deserves a place on the same bookshelf as *Death on the Ice*, if not on a shelf above.”

THE SOUTHERN GAZETTE

“Gary Collins delivers a powerful reminder that the 1914 sealing disaster shouldn’t be dismissed as an act of God or a freak tragedy. The men on the SS Newfoundland, and their fathers and grandfathers before them, faced treacherous working conditions and risked their lives every year just to get by. *Left to Die* helps to ensure that their struggle and stories will be remembered.” — CANADA’S HISTORY

A Time That Was

“Collins’s gift is that of capturing real people and real lives.” — THE NORTHEAST AVALON TIMES

“A book to re-read every Christmas.”

THE PEI GUARDIAN

“Readers disheartened by the panic shopping and often forced conviviality of the holiday season will rejoice in the sagas of family, community, triumph and travail that native Newfoundland writer Gary Collins delivers in *A Time That Was*.” — THE CHRONICLE HERALD

**Desperation:
The Queen of Swansea**

“I loved this book, I could find no fault with it, no low points, no extraneous material and, certainly, no boring passages or ramblings. Mr. Collins is clearly at the top of his storytelling game.” — THE MIRAMICHI READER

“Desperation: The Queen of Swansea is a must read.”

EDWARDS BOOK CLUB

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BY GARY COLLINS

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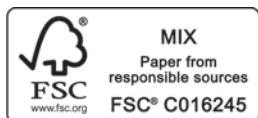
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I dedicate this book to Janine—my niece, my friend—who has so skilfully “encapsulated” each one of my books and who has long sought her indigenous roots.

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THE LAST BEOTHUK

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THERE WAS A sudden blur beneath the dripping boughs. The plump *kosweet*'s left front leg had just reached the full extent of its reach, when a sleek, burnt, black-tipped spear punctured the delicate skin behind the shoulder blade of the unsuspecting animal.

For one heartbeat the deer halted, shocked into immobility. Then the spear sank farther into its soft fur. It went deep, between the ribs, and tore into a lung. The pain pushed the animal forward in flashes of grey along the narrow trail. There was a loud snap in the still air as the spear in the animal's side broke against a tree as it ran. The rest of the panicked herd sped away from the trail, the dozen or more deer flashing over the barrens and disappearing into the trees beyond.

The figure who stepped into the game trail made no attempt to follow his prey. His leg muscles were tense and cramped from crouching. Long before the dawn he had hidden beneath the sloping, wet boughs of the spruce tree.

It had been carefully chosen, hard by the twisting trail of the *kosweet* and downwind from the flaring pink nostrils of the deer, which had led the small herd. The hunter had let the

young stag, proud and strong, pass where he lay hidden. The rut was barely over and the buck's meat would be tainted and foul-smelling with its sex glands. Instead he had chosen a female as his target and set out.

Cold autumn rain drizzled through the trees and settled onto the alder bush gorse and low shrubs. The raw wind that blew from the grey east carried the moisture deeper into the shrouded forest. Fog hung among the trees in gossamer webs.

The luxury of stretching relaxed the muscles of the tawny-skinned hunter. He turned into the wind and followed the winding trail the wounded deer had taken into the nearby forest. He wore deerskin clothing, which, with the soaking he'd gotten from his long wait, stank of old animal fat. The hide was plastered to his lean frame in dripping black, grey, and mottled white patches of heavy hair.

He had the easy gait of one born to walk, each effortless step the full length of his reach, a distance-eating stride, light and soundless. The slightly angular, hairless face was framed with a mane of hair the colour of a raven on a rainy night, the weight of it resting on his shoulders. The moisture beaded in his oily hair before dripping onto the warm, reddish-brown skin of his exposed neck. He was a Beothuk Indian, and he didn't know if he was one of the last of his breed on the Island of Newfoundland.

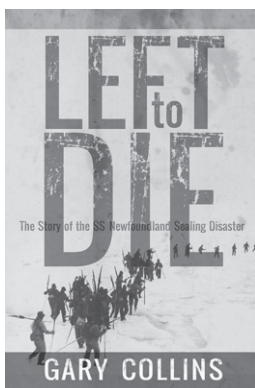
His brown eyes were deep and intense but hinted at wisdom and compassion. Now they searched the trail ahead, missing nothing. His eyes narrowed to slits against the cold rain. He left the low bushes of the barrens and strode on into the forest of tall spruce trees, following the narrow trail of the caribou. Spots of froth appeared on the higher bushes. It was a sure sign of a lung wound. He made no hurry, knowing he was on the deer's death trail.

Here the clinging bushes of the open barrens were left behind. The ground was covered with a yellow carpet of moss, with only the mar of the age-old caribou lead snaking among the tall trees, exposing the rocky soil beneath the floor. He found his spear shaft just past the first few trees. The break was red with blood. He caught the scent of the doe before he saw her, her smell strong and filled with death. A faint movement in a patch of ferns caught his eye. Moving closer, he approached cautiously, stepping around the back of the deer and not in front. He knew the smaller sharp antlers of the female were just as deadly as the larger of the stag. The cloven hooves were sharp.

The animal was lying on her right side, the wound from his broken spear barely visible, with only a trace of blood showing. The dying animal made a feeble, frightened attempt to rise at his approach, but the effort was too much and her efforts only caused a burst of frothy red bubbles to gush from her nostrils. Walking slowly around the back of the doe, the tall Beothuk watched the long pink tongue fall from the side of its open mouth. Suddenly, the long, graceful neck stretched out over the yellow counterpane, the short, muscled left leg stretching its length in unison with the death stretch of the head. The black cloven hoof kicked the air several times in rapid spasms before the muscles relaxed and drew the joint closer to the now still body. The black eyes of the animal remained open, staring, sightless.

Bending over the supine doe, the hunter picked up the head of his quarry by the antler and, satisfied the animal was dead, stood to his full height again. He pulled a stone knife from a sheath hanging by a leather thong around his narrow waist. Walking behind the fallen *kosweet*, he sighted along the direction of its staring eye, then stepped to a tree directly in

ALSO BY GARY COLLINS



Left to Die

ISBN: 9781771173285

Cecil Mouland, one of the last living survivors of the SS *Newfoundland* sealing disaster, told his story to Gary Collins in the fall of 1971 while travelling to St. John's, where the old ice hunter would live out his final days. This book grew from that encounter and stands alone as the defining tale of the men who were left to die on the ice.

The historic convergence of ice, seals, and men in late March 1914 marked the end of Newfoundland's innocence. Men both young and old left their homes from all over the province that year to pursue the annual seal hunt. Among the vessels that took them to the ice was the *Newfoundland*, a wooden-walled steamship captained by the famous Captain Westbury Kean. With no wireless aboard the ship, the stage was set for seventy-eight of the men who went over the side and their fates sealed.

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