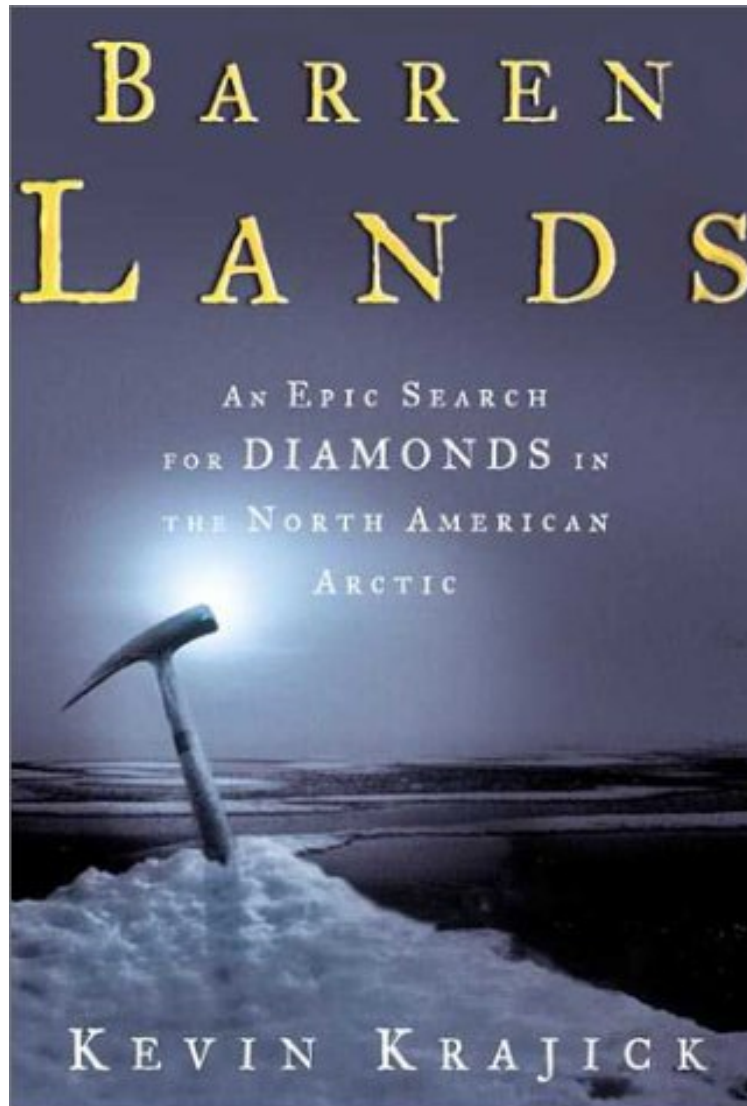


Barren Lands: An Epic Search for Diamonds in the North American Arctic

Kevin Krajick

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Kevin Krajick : Barren Lands: An Epic Search for Diamonds in the North American Arctic before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Barren Lands: An Epic Search for Diamonds in the North American Arctic:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One of the best-told geological stories.By Hobart M. KingWhen I started reading this book I was immediately impressed by the author's long involvement in reporting on Canadian diamonds and the fact that he interviewed and was in repeated contact with nearly every important person in this story.

This gave him an overview and perspective that none of the people involved could possess. Just as important, the author understood and could communicate the fine details of minerals, exploration, rock units, glaciation and the other geological elements clearly and accurately. The book was easy-to-read, interesting and hard to put down. One of the best-told geological stories. If you are only going to read one book about Canadian diamonds or diamond exploration, this is the one. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic story! It was informative and riveting up until ...By Elizabeth Fantastic story! It was informative and riveting up until the very end! I got too excited halfway through and lent it to my mother to read, and then had to wait two days for her to finish it and give it back to me so I could finish the last couple of chapters. It's currently sitting on my brother's nightstand! I learned so much about diamond formation and prospecting, exploration, and what it's like to do something like that for a living, and I mean a real sense of having that passion and dedicating your life to it. The history was extremely well written into the story and provided a lot of insight; the chapter detailing the battle of Bloody Falls still haunts me. I would recommend this book to absolutely everyone. Whether they have an interest in mineralogy or not, they will by the end of this book! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. True story, too long By Crystal Guy Interesting true story of a persistent geologist whose somewhat harrowing adventures eventually pay off handsomely. Krajick, who was not involved, provides much detail about disagreements within the characters' personal relationships, reads like a grouchy geologist's diary. Would have given it 5 stars had it been 50 pages shorter without all the grumbling.

In the tradition of Sebastian Junger's *The Perfect Storm* and Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air*, *Barren Lands* is the extraordinary tale of two small-time prospectors who risked their lives to discover \$17 billion worth of diamonds in the desolate tundra of the far north. In the late 1970's, two men set out on a twenty-year search for a North American gem mine, along a fabled path that had defied 16th-century explorers, Wild West prospectors, and modern geologists. They are an unlikely pair: Chuck Fipke, a ragged, stuttering fellow with a singular talent for finding sand-size mineral grains, and Stew Blusson, an ultra-tough geologist and helicopter pilot. Inventive, eccentric and ruthless, they follow a trail of geologic clues left by predecessors all the way from backwoods Arkansas up the glaciated high Rockies into the vast and haunted "barren lands" of northern Canada. With a South African geochemist's "secret weapon," Fipke and Blusson outwit rivals, including the immense De Beers cartel, and make one of the world's greatest diamond discoveries- setting off a stampede unseen since the Klondike gold rush. A story of obsession and scientific intrigue, *Barren Lands* is also an elegy to one of earth's last great wild places, a starkly beautiful and mysterious land strewn with pure lakes and alive with wolves and caribou. An endless variety of primeval glacial rock formations hide copper, zinc, and gold, in addition to diamonds. Now that the barrens are "open for business," what will happen to this great wilderness region? *Barren Lands* is an unforgettable journey for those who, in the words of a nineteenth-century trapper, "want to see that country before it is all gone."

From Library Journal Diamonds spell adventure, and their lure is timeless, as evidenced by this compelling book. Magazine writer Krajick (*Natural History*, *Newsweek*) leaves few stones unturned as he presents not only a "diamond rush" in Canada's Northwest Territories during the 1990s but a history of one man's pursuit of this gem. The familiar names are here, including Charles Tiffany, Frederick Kunz, Cecil Rhodes, and the ubiquitous De Beers. So, too, are the diamond mines scattered across the globe in India, South Africa, South America, the United States, and Canada. Scandals and scams have long been a part of diamond lore; the Great Diamond Hoax in 1872 Colorado rates a fascinating chapter of its own. The chief character featured throughout is Canadian Chuck Fipke, an eccentric, obsessed prospector and principal in the Lac de Gras/Ekati diamond mine (currently in operation in Canada's Barren Lands). A combination of arctic climate, corporate spies, and inexact geologic science, mixed with human greed, grizzlies, and prodigious amounts of insects and alcohol, turns the last half of *Barren Lands* into a suspenseful thriller. Miners, geologists, and rockhounds will be spellbound, but the appeal will easily extend to general audiences as well. This book is highly recommended for all libraries. Janet Ross, formerly with Sparks Branch Lib., NV Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist When we think of treasure hunters, we tend to think of gold or silver, but diamonds are rarer than either, and humans have been hunting them for half a millennium. Two such diamond hunters are Charles Fipke and Stewart Blusson, the prospectors who struck it rich in a region of Canada's Northwest Territories called, appropriately enough, the Barren Lands. Their adventure is the centerpiece of this diamond-hunting story, which combines excitement and danger, disappointment, tragedy, and the kind of luck that changes your life forever. Fipke and Blusson became extremely wealthy men; others who spent their lives in pursuit of the elusive glittering mineral were not so fortunate. Krajick, a journalist who reported on the Barren Lands diamond rush for *Discover* magazine, is a smooth storyteller with a novelist's ear for dialogue. But these aren't flamboyant fictional characters living out made-up lives; they're real people, and this is what really happened to them. A can't-miss for fans of real-life adventure. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "A gripping yarn [and] an eloquent portrayal of a place few will ever see, the great treeless tundra." -- *Smithsonian* magazine, February 2002 "Delivers some of the most vivid impressions of the Canadian North I've read." -- *National Post*, Nov. 17, 2001 "Krajick, a talented storyteller, strikes it rich." -- *The Economist*, October 20, 2001 A solidly researched

nonfiction that reads like a novel. ...Armchair adventure at its very best." -- Rock Gem, November 2001
Krajick [is] a skilled reporter along the lines of John McPhee but, for my money, with a better eye." -- Business Week, Dec. 1, 2001