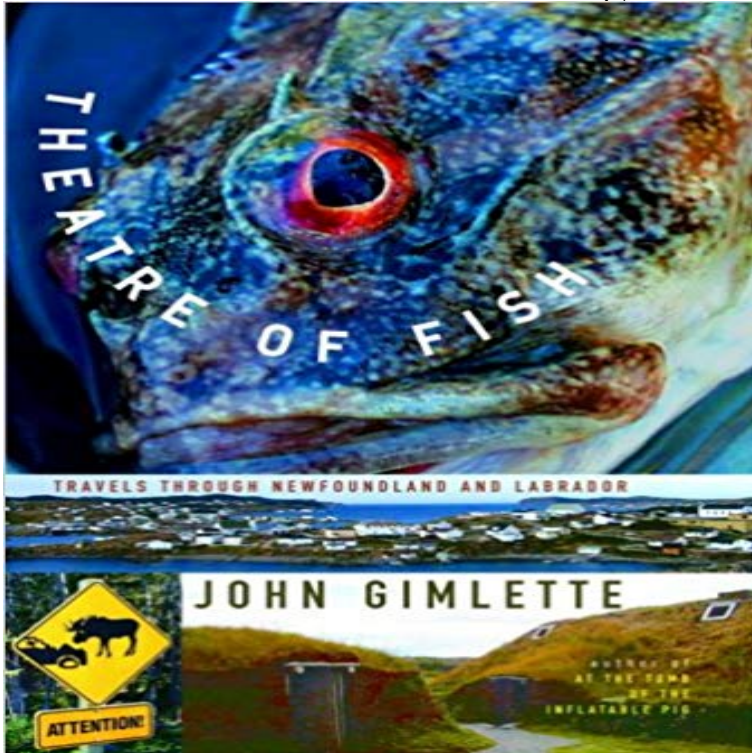


## Theatre of Fish: Travels Through Newfoundland and Labrador



An extraordinary journey across the magnificent, delinquent coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. John Gimlette's journey across this harsh and awesome landscape, the eastern extreme of the Americas, broadly mirrors that of Dr Eliot Curwen, his great-grandfather, who spent a summer there as a doctor in 1893, and who was witness to some of the most beautiful ice and cruelest poverty in the British Empire. Using Curwen's extraordinarily frank journal, John Gimlette revisits the places his great-grandfather encountered and along the way explores his own links with this harsh, often brutal, land. At the heart of the book however, are the outporters, the present-day inhabitants of these shores. Descended from last-hope Irishmen, outlaws, navy deserters and fishermen from Jersey and Dorset, these outporters are a warm, salty, witty and exuberant breed. They often speak with the accent and idioms of the original colonists, sometimes Shakespearean, sometimes just plain impenetrable. Theirs is a bizarre story; of houses (or saltboxes) that can be dragged across land or floated over the sea; of eating habits inherited from seventeenth-century sailors (salt beef, rum pease-pudding and molasses;) of Labradorians sealed in ice from October to June; of fishing villages that produced a diva to sing with Verdi; and of their own illicit, impromptu dramatics, the Mummings. This part-history-part-travelogue exploration of Newfoundland and Labrador's coast and culture by a well-established travel writer is a glorious read to be enjoyed by both armchair tourist, and anyone contemplating a visit to Canada's far-eastern shores.

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