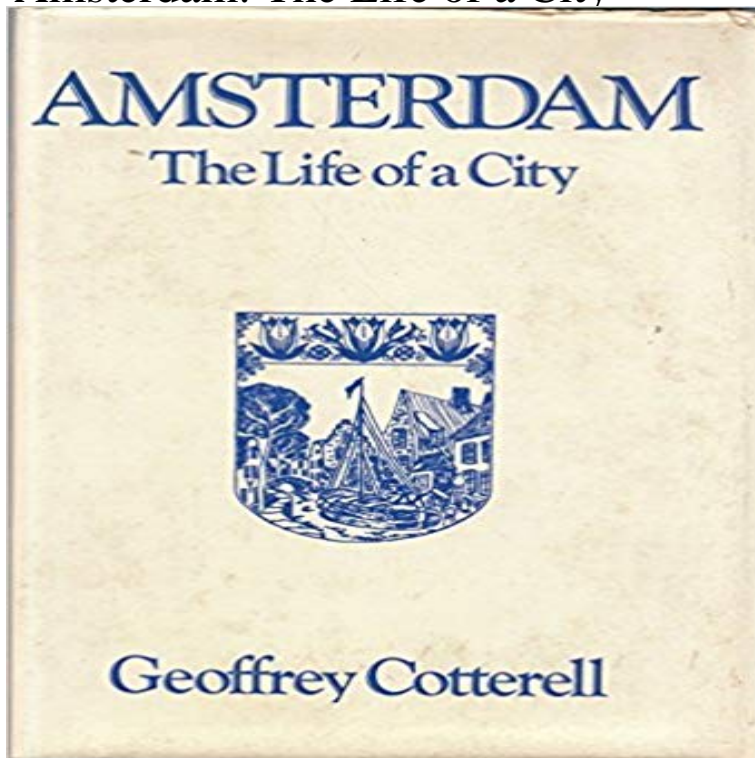


Amsterdam: The Life of a City



With candor and wit, eloquence and high style, Geoffrey Cotterell re-creates the life story of the the most civilized and agreeable city in the world: Amsterdam - its people, its history, its mood. Beginning in A.D. 50 with the comments of a less-than enthusiastic Pliny, Cotterell chronicles the complete fortunes of Amsterdam through centuries of conflict and fluctuation: its great years as the strongest financial and shipping center of the civilized world; its tumultuous wars with Spain and England, Napoleon and Hitler; its terrible years of the Inquisition, followed by centuries of scrupulous tolerance; its progressive and lively present. With a marvelous sense of history, Cotterell enacts the personal dramas of the great Burgomasters and of the city's cultural giants like Rembrandt and Spinoza. He delves into the stories of Anne Frank and her diary and of the vicissitudes of the royal House of Orange. He traces the creation of the East India Company's vast empire, and investigates the odd events, like tulip mania, which in the seventeenth century saw the reckless speculation of millions of guilders - upon tulip bulbs. Most of all, he captures the very character of Amsterdam's people and of the mood of the city.

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