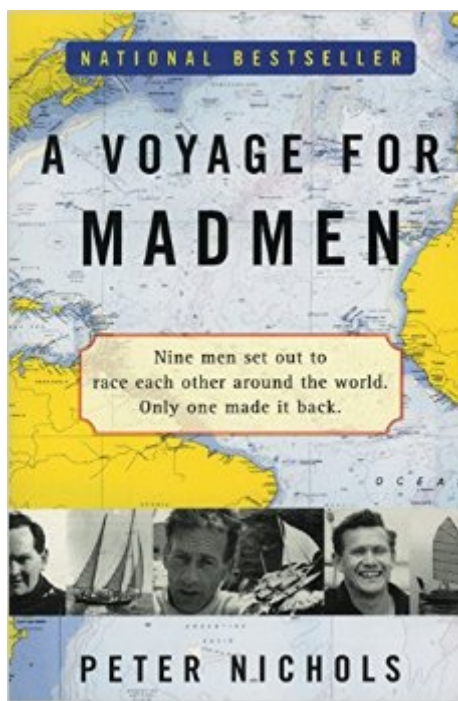


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# A Voyage For Madmen



## Synopsis

In 1968, nine sailors set off on the most daring race ever held: to single-handedly circumnavigate the globe nonstop. It was a feat that had never been accomplished and one that would forever change the face of sailing. Ten months later, only one of the nine men would cross the finish line and earn fame, wealth, and glory. For the others, the reward was madness, failure, and death. In this extraordinary book, Peter Nichols chronicles a contest of the individual against the sea, waged at a time before cell phones, satellite dishes, and electronic positioning systems. *A Voyage for Madmen* is a tale of sailors driven by their own dreams and demons, of horrific storms in the Southern Ocean, and of those riveting moments when a split-second decision means the difference between life and death.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One day I heard a couple of book reviewers on the radio rattle off a list of good books, and I jotted this title down. When I got the book, I was uncertain as to whether I would enjoy it. The only sailing I had ever done was out in SF Bay as a passenger whose assigned job was to stay out of the way. But after reading the book, my view of sailing has changed. This book utterly grabbed me. I couldn't put it down and I relished every word. While the book is a true story, it isn't just a documentary. It is full of stories and portraits of people who are more fantastic than fiction. I think that not knowing anything about the Golden Globe race kept me in greater suspense. This was a page-turner 'til the very end. I applaud Peter Nichols and his writing style. I read *Perfect Storm* and found it sterile and unemotional. This book was just the opposite. It was invigorating, enriching and

human.

There have been an amazing number of books about sailing adventures released over the past several years. Peter Nichols's "A Voyage for Madmen" is one of the better ones. Given that solo sailing circumnavigations are a yearly ritual today, we tend to forget that as recently as a generation ago it was practically unheard of. In 1968, nine sailors, mostly independently of one another, decided to try and become the first to sail around the world alone without stopping. This was in an era before satellite weather radar or advanced communication equipment. Basically, for their whole voyage, the competitors faced the ravages of the sea alone. The feat became a contest to see who could finish first and who could finish the fastest. That separate distinction became moot, when only one sailor was able to complete the journey. Nichols expertly introduces each of the competitors and describes the unbelievable difficulties they faced. An ardent sailor himself, he writes with much authority, but with also much drama. The only drawback is that at times he is too technical for the non-sailor to follow, but this hardly dulls the book's excitement. In fact if you go in unfamiliar (as I was) with the actual event, this book reads like a novel with surprise twists and turns along the way. And the eventual winner of the race is the type of hero, though we may question his sanity, that anyone can admire. Overall, this a great book for sailing enthusiasts that can also be enjoyed by anyone else who like a good nautical story.

Hard to put down, but best savored with patience in smaller bites. Many nuggets of wisdom and a plethora of well turned prose. I've read several of the other great books about the 1968 Golden Globe, ie; *The Long Way* (Bernard Moitessier), *A World of My Own* (Robin Knox-Johnston) and *The Strange Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst* (Tomalin and Hall), but this book is different from any of them. Mr Nichol's insightful overview of the race brings all these other books together to deepen your picture of this historical event. Having the perspective of these other books really heightened MY enjoyment, however I'm recommending this book to friends as a "first exposure" to this fascinating story. With the author's own seagoing background (his other non-fiction book, *Sea Change*, is also excellent) and unbridled love of the sea and things nautical, this story truly comes to life! I can't say how a non-sailor will take this book, but if you enjoy a good story, and particularly a good sea yarn, you'll love this book! Kudos to Peter Nichols. I want more!!!

I bought this book after reading an excellent review in the New York Times. I was therefore fully expecting to find the story very interesting as I am an armchair adventurer (I have much enjoyed the

recent non-fiction thrillers like "Into Thin Air" and "The Perfect Storm"). I was however, completely unprepared for how exciting a book this is. I've rarely been seriously unable to put a book down before now. I read "A Voyage For Madmen" from cover to cover, entirely enthralled to the last, heart-rending page. Not only does the book take you right on board the boat with these 'madmen' on their extraordinary voyage, but Nichols' insight into the soul of these men, and of the sea itself, makes this a profoundly moving book, and one which goes a long way towards answering the deep questions about the devils that drive such men. A wonderful book!

I read Peter Nichols first book, "Sea Change" with complete facination. He is a great storyteller and a wise soul. He told that true story, of a rocky marriage, of life on a beloved boat and the ultimate demise of both, with grace and candor. The new book, "Voyage for Madmen" is, again, a beautifully and honestly told true story. His knowledge of the sea and boats gives him the proper foundation to tell the harrowing tale of the Golden Globe race, but it's his ability to get inside the people involved that makes this a great read. Nichols has done it again. Keep up the great work.

If you had written this same story in a fiction format, nobody would have stomached it. Nine men start a race around the world and no two finish it in quite the same way? One never stops, another goes insane, some drop out early, others are forced to ditch on the verge of finishing, and the winner is unlikely and likeable? But it's a true story, and a well told one at that. Nichols tells enough to make the layman feel at home with the nautical ins and outs of his story, but doesn't dumb it down so much as to exclude experienced sailors.

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