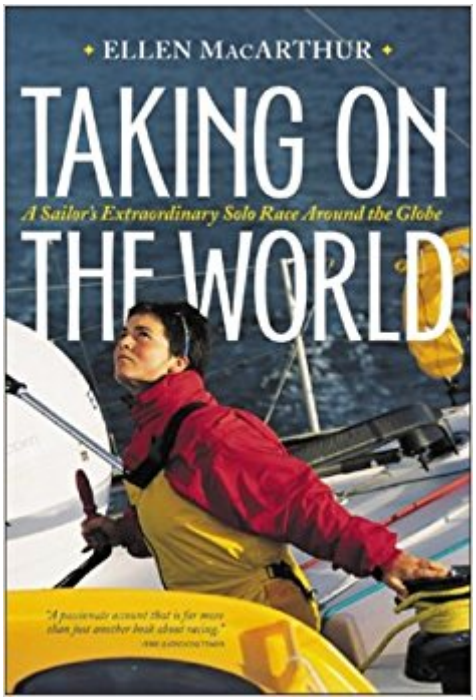
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Taking On The World : A Sailor's Extraordinary Solo Race Around The Globe



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Synopsis

The Vendee Globe around-the-world sailboat race is sailing’s ultimate challenge. A single-handed, non-stop race including 13,000 miles through the most dangerous waters. Less than half the boats that start the Vendee Globe race finish it. Of those that don’t, the luckiest drop out; the rest are claimed by the sea. At five feet, two inches tall, Ellen MacArthur, at 24 years old, was the youngest and smallest competitor in the 2000-2001 Vendee Globe race. In an event dominated by older men of the elite, French, long-distance racing fraternity, she was a long shot to even finishing. On February 11, 2001, Ellen MacArthur finished the race in second place. She became the youngest sailor ever to finish, the first woman to earn a top-three placing and the second fastest person ever to do so alone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

No one can argue with MacArthur’s prowess on the high seas. The 24-year-old made international headlines in 2001 for placing second in the Vendee-Globe, a nonstop, 26,000-mile race that she completed alone in 94 days. Unfortunately, this exhaustive memoir of MacArthur’s coming-of-age as a sailor in landlocked Derbyshire, England, doesn’t make for a triumphant maiden voyage into the literary world. The book begins with her birth ("I was not in the mood to come out, so Mum had to be induced three weeks after my expected arrival date") and spares no detail of her life thus far, including that Paddy, her pet duck, "considered me his closest family." The real action of this book-the race itself-doesn’t begin until Chapter 16, and even then the adventure is recounted

slowly. When MacArthur writes about bidding farewell to one of her greatest supporters as she is about to set sail for the odyssey of a lifetime, she says, "He pushed a hard-boiled egg and an apple into my hand; I hadn't wanted any breakfast that morning, and he knew I wouldn't have eaten anything since then." In the end, MacArthur's unfocused style transforms what must have been an exciting experience into a remarkably boring read. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

THE YOUNG WOMAN WHO TOOK THE SAILING WORLD BY STORM "A passionate account that is far more than just another book about racing."--The (London) Times On February 11, 2001, Ellen MacArthur completed the Vendee Globe singlehanded nonstop sailboat race around the planet, perhaps the most grueling challenge in the world of sports, and docked amid the 250,000 well-wishers who had braved a winter night to welcome her back to France. Alone and unsupported, she had spent more than three months at sea and had beaten everything the race could throw at her--storms, icy seas, exhaustion, rigging failures, and, when she was fighting for first place, a catastrophic collision with a submerged shipping container that could have cost her not just the lead but her life. But Ellen had always known that the dream she was chasing would demand her last ounce of fortitude. To give any less would be to let down herself and everyone who believed in her. At twenty-four she became the youngest person ever to complete the race and the fastest woman--and second fastest sailor--to circumnavigate the globe alone. The magnitude of her achievement was almost beyond comprehension, but it was the character that emerged from behind the headlines that made the more lasting impression. Modestly unassuming yet possessed of an indomitable will, Ellen made people feel they could do anything. Taking On the World is Ellen's story--how, from her childhood in landlocked Derbyshire, England, she made it to the start of the Vendee Globe. Passionate and wise in its portrayals of love, friendship, and moments of despair, it is a story of longing and adventure, and of the incredible race that catapulted Ellen onto the front pages and into the limelight of international sailing. Dramatic and moving, Taking On the World will inspire and enthrall all who read it. "An exuberant, headlong, exhausting ride. . . . In describing the terrifying exhilaration of surfing storm waves in the Southern Ocean, the absolute rock-bottom fatigue of single-handing a 60-foot boat for months at a time, the intricacies of navigation and weather routing, the frustrations of raising sponsorship money, or the highs and lows of her own emotions and motivations, MacArthur is always eloquent, passionate--and unfailingly honest. This is more than a book about sailboat racing; it's also about a dream ferociously pursued and the price paid for realizing it. Taking On the World is impossible to put down."--Derek Lundy, author, Godforsaken Sea and The Way of a Ship "As different from other sailing books as Ellen MacArthur

is from other sailors. . . . A story of mythic shape--of a young girl who receives a call to adventure and sets out on a compulsive journey, and finds mentors, tests, dark caves, despair, a supreme ordeal, and triumph. . . . The story of a magnificent obsession, with all the physical difficulty and emotional fallout that came with it. One is left full of admiration, and wondering mightily what this journeying heroine will achieve next."--Peter Nichols, author, A Voyage for Madmen "Never have so many cheered so heartily for the sailor who finished second."--Herb McCormick, sailing columnist, New York Times "MacArthur's triumph in sailing 26,000 miles around the world in less than 100 days sets standards in daring, defiance, and yachtsmanship that may not be matched for years to come."--The (London) Times "You don't need to be a sailor to find it inspiring. It's about endeavour, a riff on Kipling's 'If' that has you wondering why you don't just go out and fulfill your dreams. She writes with fluency and frankness, . . . showing a wisdom that is beyond her years."--The Independent

Ellen MacArthur was still an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) before being awarded Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, a very high honor indeed for somebody only in her thirties. She breathes and lives sailing. This book is a first rate publication with colored photographs and a tale of a girl who grew up to sail the dangerous oceans in a man's world and break records.

The author starts by recounting her life story, and how she came to love sailing and the nature of the sea. She beautifully narrates how she chose her sailing boats, of races she's done, and of the wild life at sea. I very much enjoyed her encounters with whales and dolphins. I was also mesmerized by her journeys alone in the middle of the ocean, and her relentless ferocity in pursuing her dreams.The book ends with the Vendee-Globe, a nonstop, 26,000-mile race that she completed alone in 94 days in 2001. She was only 24-year-old and came in second place. This was her first attempt. Quite an astonishing feat!This book was a very inspirational reading; a witness to what can be achieved when one follows his or her dreams. I now want to buy a sailing boat and go sailing around the world! And fly around the world too!

A reasonably written account of a self absorbed obsesive person. Still, admirable and a reasonable read.

This is a riveting read for any sailor or athlete. Ellen MacArthur is a driven and inspiring character,

and top-notch role model.

Read about her in the yachting world magazine. I grew up sailing on the bay and the gulf. Watch sailing clips on You Tube about her. the book is a good one how she got started sailing and progressed through to professional.

Was a gift for my brother, he loved it. He's a sailor also so he could relate to her story.

Very interesting story about the author's background and ultimate success at a world class solo event. I couldn't put it down. That to me, is always the test of a good book.

A good story, and a good read, but seeming to lack in the richly woven details that would make this more than a somewhat flat recounting of the course of events. There are certainly dramatic moments, but it seems they are told in a way that cruises right past the tension, drama, or emotion of the moment. Compare with Lundy's "Godforsaken Sea": he will leave a sailor clinging to the overturned hull of a half-sunk boat in the stormy, near-frozen Southern Ocean for most of a book. He will trap you *inside* such a boat. The difference is not just the particular situations. MacArthur was certainly in plenty of peril at various points, but there's a difference between mentioning that one got quite bruised on the last page and being put into a situation where you're hanging from a thin rope in 40 knots winds 80 feet off the deck and actually feeling the pain of getting each one of those bruises. Often she will set up a situation which contains a bit of tension or drama and then almost matter-of-factly tell you how it turned out, deflating the anticipation of an absorbing anecdote. Telling the reader that something was difficult or that she was tired doesn't communicate what it was like to be there. Saying that something was frustrating isn't the same as getting the reader to feel that frustration. That's what a good writer does, and that's what is missing here. Where Lundy puts you there, MacArthur tells you that, yes, she was there. It's almost as if, having finished the book, I feel I've read the back cover and am ready to dive into what sounds like it ought to be a riveting story.Often I was left wanting more (technical) details about the learning, sailing, and promotion she was doing, how she actually did what she did, not the mere fact that she did it or that it happened. Then, at one of the most dramatic points in the story, it isn't perhaps made *quite* clear enough why MacArthur is doing what she is (How will this messing around solve the problem? What *is* the problem?), and what she is doing is full of fine detail that makes too little sense without a good picture or, perish the thought, an engineering diagram. The diagram that *is* present in the book,

and could have made the gist of things plain, were it just a tiny bit more complete, doesn't. By the time I figure it out, the dramatic potential is wasted. Argh.Worth reading for those with an interest in sailing or MacArthur, and surely inspirational for many readers, but be prepared to use your imagination to fill in the gaps that ought not to be there.

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