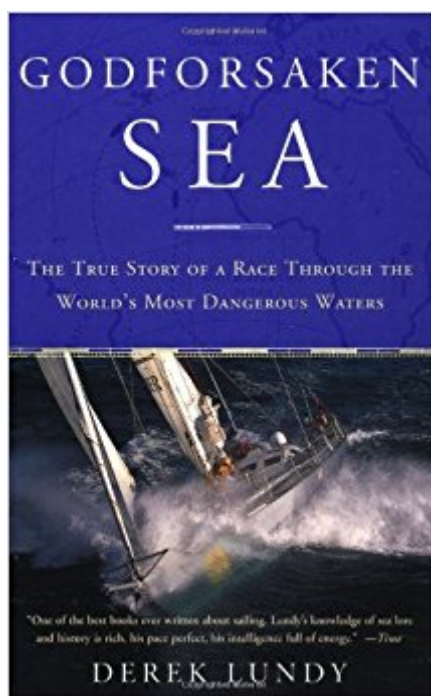


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# Godforsaken Sea: The True Story Of A Race Through The World's Most Dangerous Waters



## Synopsis

"The best book ever written about the terrifying business of single-handed sailing--.Â Â Lundy tells a harrowing tale, as tight and gripping as *The Perfect Storm* or *Into Thin Air*."--San Francisco Chronicle  
A chilling account of the world's most dangerous sailing race, the Vendée Globe, *Godforsaken Sea* is at once a hair-raising adventure story, a graceful evocation of the sailing life, and a thoughtful meditation on danger and those who seek it. This is the story of the 1996-1997 Vendée Globe, a solo sailing race that binds its competitors to just a few, cruelly simple rules: around the world from France by way of Antarctica, no help, no stopping, one boat, one sailor. The majority of the race takes place in the Southern Ocean, where icebergs and gale-force winds are a constant threat, and the waves build to almost unimaginable heights.Â Â As author Derek Lundy puts it: "try to visualize a never-ending series of five- or six-story buildings moving toward you at about forty miles an hour." The experiences of the racers reveal the spirit of the men and women who push themselves to the limits of human endeavor--even if it means never returning home.Â Â You'll meet the gallant Brit who beats miles back through the worst seas to save a fellow racer, the sailing veteran who calmly smokes cigarette after cigarette as his boat capsizes, and the Canadian who, hours before he disappears forever, dispatches this message: "If you drag things out too long here, you're sure to come to grief." Derek Lundy elevates the story of one race into an appreciation of those thrill-seekers who embody the most heroic and eccentric aspects of the human condition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Southern Ocean is the sailor's Everest. These are unquestionably the most dangerous waters in the world: hurricane infested, frigid, wholly unpredictable, and so remote, according to Derek Lundy, that "only a few astronauts have ever been further from land than a person on a vessel in that position." Encircling Antarctica, this fearsome body of water has terrorized sailors and wrecked the ablest of ships throughout maritime history. Imagine, then, a round-the-world, single-handed sailing race of the most extreme kind--no stopping, no assistance--requiring each lone sailor to spend half the total race distance (roughly 13,000 miles) fighting this nightmarish, merciless sea. The race is the Vendee Globe, and *The Godforsaken Sea* is the story of the 1996-1997 competition. Fourteen men and two women began the race in Les Sables-d'Olonne, France. Six officially finished; three were wrecked and rescued; one sailor performed emergency surgery on himself mid-race; one perished. This is high adventure of the most gripping, perilous sort, demanding a tightly controlled, suspenseful narrative: "Visualize a never-ending series of five- or six-story buildings, with sloping sides of various angles ... moving towards [the sailors] at forty miles an hour. Some of the time, the top one or two stories will collapse on top of them." But Lundy delivers more, weaving a superior fabric of psychology and physics, action and reflection. Even the utter novice will emerge understanding the architecture of racing vessels, the evolution of storms, the physical and psychological courage required to survive five-and-a half months battling the ocean alone. Sailing aficionados may already believe that the Vendee Globe is the pinnacle of extreme sports. With Lundy's help, armchair adventurers can dig in and hang on for the ride. --Svenja Soldovieri --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

On November 3, 1996, the 16 solo sailboat racers of the third Vendee Globe contest left the little French port of Les Sables d'Olonne for a four-month round trip whose most trying feature would be a circumnavigation of Antarctica. Lundy, an experienced amateur sailor, followed the race on its Web site, on which the race organizers provided regular updates and on which some of the sailors posted bulletins. From the beginning, it's obvious that the competitors are a bit more committed than your average weekend sailor. They hire sleep specialists to determine their personal best-sleep periods so they'll know when to put their boats on automatic pilot for a quick catnap. One sailor, Pete Goss, took a scalpel to his inflamed elbow, following a doctor's faxed instructions while his boat heeled and all his instruments slid off their tray (so now I'm frothing at the mouth, and it was quite funny, really). As Lundy describes these sailors' encounters with the raging southern ocean and waves like a never-ending series of five- or six-story buildings... moving towards [the boat] at about forty miles an hour, readers will get caught up in the race and in the fates of the 16 racers. Despite

all the excitement, the book has a buffered feel. Quite simply, Lundy wasn't there. It's a measure of his skill, then, that he manages to make the action as palpable as he does, lacing his report of the race with a little maritime history, ocean science and allusions to the likes of Conrad and Joyce. This literate adventure book was a bestseller in Canada. \$50,000 ad/promo; BOMC selection; author tour. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The topic of covering the Globe Vendee race, the knockdowns, triumphs, rescues and death at sea is a formidable one and Derek Lundy to a degree succeeds in presenting the reader with a respectable portrayal of solo sail racing around the world's most dangerous ocean waters in the southern Antarctic seas. The book, however, moves from fantastic suspenseful portrayal of danger and rescue to the more mundane trivialities of "who's out in the lead...who's bringing up the rear...who's moving ahead" as if the reader had no idea of the outcome of the 1996-1997 Vendee-Globe race. (Maybe there are a great many readers who do not have any knowledge of the outcome of the event...but it's certainly not necessary to present this book in an anticipatory 'present tense' as if there was to be a surprise outcome). But do not despair as there is much to enjoy and learn in this book. One competitor takes up self-surgery to cut out infected parts of his arm and another competitor lashes himself to his inverted boat to await rescue in the cold Antarctic seas. The author's strongest presentation is when he delves into the minds of these solo around the world sailors. Why do they do this? And the very best story of all might have been missed by the author as the first woman to successfully complete the Globe-Vendee (Chabaud) slowly and steadily succeeds at the end of the pack. Her story needed to be told...at best she is followed by the author as he is obliged to keep the reader informed about all the boats in the race. I say read the book..but borrow it as it isn't a keeper in my library.

Very exciting book. Extremely well written

While we all tempt fate at some time in our lives, but these sailors do it everyday for 4 months straight in what has got to be the most dangerous race in existence. We vicariously live through Lundy's words as these boatbound adventurers pass the point on this planet where only astronauts have been farther from land. As they speed their way to the vast Southern Ocean we cross our fingers hoping they elude the growler bergs or the 80ft wave with their name on it. Running with the wind on a 60ft sled of a boat at 26 knots with the spinnaker up in 60 knot gusts surrounded by 3

story waves these racers set the autopilot and go below for nap! Sleep would be the last thing on my mind but alas I am only reading about it in the comfort of my own bed. Sailors will appreciate this book the most. The structure of the book is a bit circuitous and Lundy has a penchant for waxing philosophically about call of the water and each racers internal sirens that lure them to enter the race. But I loved the book. Read it now, just in time for Vendee Globe 2000 which starts in November.

The most compelling sailing story I have ever read, and that's saying something. Even a non-sailor will find this book to be a harrowing, beautifully written page-turner. A couple of the episodes, particularly a rescue in the Southern Ocean and a return to France, are hard to read without choking up with emotion. The race itself is the greatest challenge of human competitive courage that I can think of.

Whew! What a story! The book is very well-written and will enable the reader to experience the nail-biting excitement of the Race from the safety of a cozy LazyBoy. I've read other reviews here and found that a few criticized the 'bouncing around'. This actually helps to keep things exciting and the book moves at a quick pace. The short chapters helped me (busy) steal a quick chapter here and there. I found myself reading much of this while engaged in air travel and often caught myself breathing heavily and grunting out 'wow', 'ugh', and 'oh' (fellow passengers often inquired about what I was reading). I'm a Northwest sailor who's experienced some rough weather. This made my experiences seem like pony rides compared to this wild adventure. Imagine spending a few months - alone and non-stop - surfing down 5-story waves at 25 knots and living through it! This is truly an incredible adventure and these are most incredible people. The writer guides you through the experiences of the participants and provides glimpses into the background and make-up of the super-humans who dreamed, dared, and survived (and those that did not) this ordeal. My only criticism is that the maps were too few and not nearly as detailed as they should have been (pull out your Atlas and you'll be happy). There could have been a few photos that would have made this great book even greater. If you're a sailor, you'll love this book. If not, you'll still be entertained and amazed by what humans can endure and achieve.

Great book. My second or 3rd time through First time was years ago. I have followed the Vendee Globe every 4 years since first reading the book and this Fall my wife and I will travel to France to see the race begin, all because of this book.

After reading the Fastnet and Sydney-Hobart race, I felt this book was a little too detailed and lathargic in the beginning. But as the story progressed, you saw the method to the author's madness. He was only setting the stage for what was about to come in the Southern Ocean. I learned a great deal about the history and the importance of the Vendee Globe to people all over the world. Reading about the trials of just preparing and getting the funding to participate in the Vendee Globe, can be a lifetime achievement for some of these sailors. With every page you turn, the book picks up more and more steam; until you don't want to turn out the lights and go to bed. I will forever be a follower of the Vendee Globe after reading this book. It was one of the most informative sailing books I have ever read. A real tribute to those sailors who risk their lives in the Southern Ocean and continue to beat the odds!

I have never even been on a sailboat before. It must be my Scandinavian Heritage makes me long for the sea. I love this book it made me feel like at times I was right behind the wheel.

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