

The Longest Voyage: Circumnavigators in the Age of Discovery



Robert Silverberg's *The Longest Voyage* captures the drama and danger and personalities in the colorful story of the first voyages around the world. In only a century, circumnavigators in small ships charted the coast of the New World and explored the Pacific. Characterized by fierce nationalism, competitiveness, and bloodshed, it was a century much like our own. These accounts begin with Magellan's unprecedented 1519-1522 circumnavigation, providing an immediate, exciting, and intimate glimpse into that historic venture. The story includes frequent threats of mutiny; the nearly unendurable extremes of heat, cold, hunger, thirst, and fatigue; the fear, the tedium, the moments of despair; the discoveries of exotic new people and strange new lands, and, finally, Magellan's own dramatic death during a fanatic attempt to convert Philippine islanders to Christianity. From the intense and brooding Magellan to the glamorous and dashing Sir Francis Drake, from Thomas Cavendish, who set off to plunder Spain's American gold, to the Dutch, whose number included pirates as well as explorers and merchants, *The Longest Voyage* is filled with seagoing exploits. Silverberg brings these early ocean explorers to life in *The Longest Voyage*. Captured within the total context of political climate, social values, and historic change that made the Age of Discovery one of excitement and drama, Magellan, Drake, Cavendish, Noort, Spilbergen, Schouten, and Le Maire are strangely contemporary.

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