



America's Victory: The Heroic Story of a Team of Ordinary Americans-- and How They Won the Greatest Yacht Race Ever

David W. Shaw

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The Heroic Story of a Team of Ordinary Americans -- and How They Won the Greatest Yacht Race Ever Set against the backdrop of the first world's fair in London, "America's Victory" takes readers into a world rich in adventure and history -- an unforgettable story of skill, daring, and honor at the heart of our national identity. The America's Cup is the oldest international trophy in competitive sports, yet few know the inspirational story of the dedicated seamen behind the original historic race. The story begins in 1850 with a terrible deal struck between the New York Yacht Club and a brilliant young boat designer: A boat would have to be built that would be the fastest in the world, and the designer would not be paid his fee unless the yacht beat all comers at The Great Exhibition in England. With a revolutionary design and striking beauty, yacht "America" set sail the following year from New York on what most experts nevertheless thought was an impossible mission. It had already cost over half a million dollars in today's currency. Now, "America" would have to beat fourteen of the best yachts the world's greatest maritime nation could bring to the line. It was a race Britain thought it couldn't lose. Yet "America's" small, unlikely team -- including Captain Brown, a Sandy Hook Pilot; first mate Nelson Comstock, whose family were early settlers of New London in Connecticut; and the brilliant designer George Steers -- achieved the almost un-thinkable. These humble, hard-working men faced the might and arrogance not only of their British competitors, but also their own backers, such as millionaire John Cox Stevens of the New York Yacht Club, who wagered they would win, but harassed and belittled them throughout the campaign. In the course of his research, David Shaw found letters and notes recounting the experience of the crew that provide a vivid historical realism for his compelling narrative. No one has previously told the story of the race from the perspective of the men who designed and sailed the plucky boat "America." Shaw places readers on board as the lone American yacht in the field crosses the finish line first, while Queen Victoria and Prince Albert look on amid cheering crowds. This is an account of an amazing feat accomplished long ago at the turning point in the growth of a young nation's confidence, but it is also the tale of a victory of the American spirit that bravely lives on today.

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