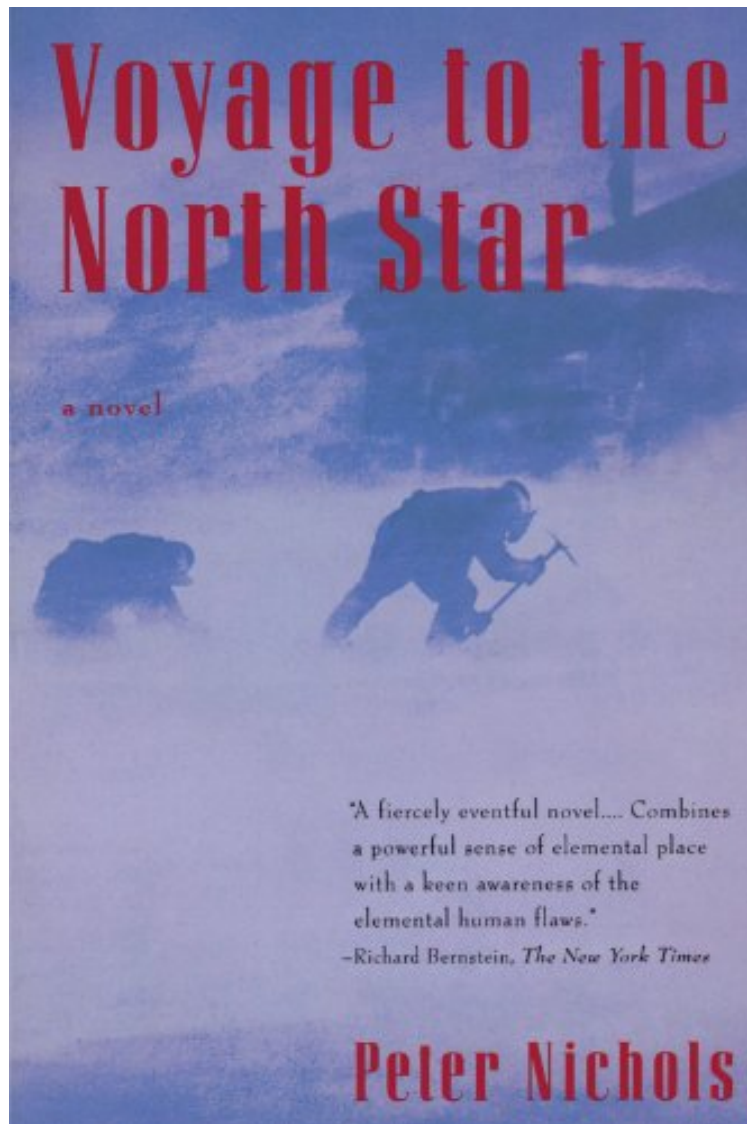


[Download ebook] Voyage to the North Star: A Novel

Voyage to the North Star: A Novel

Perseus

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#4080328 in Books Peter Nichols 2000-10Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.25 x .80 x 5.50l, .90 #File Name: 0786707992352 pagesVoyage to the North Star | File size: 54.Mb

Perseus : Voyage to the North Star: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Voyage to the North Star: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An ending like a knife in the gutBy Doug BriggsFor 332 pages Peter Nichols takes us on a rare and beautiful, then at times horrifying adventure during which we get very well acquainted with about eight characters. Boden, Shred and Moyle were men I had to admire, and for all the right reasons.Nichols made sure we would despise the wealthy and despicable Schenk - accidentally rich during the depression of the

thirties, and wildly amused as so many of the old-guard wealthy went down in financial flames. Nichols made certain we would loathe Schenk's harlot of a daughter Harriett, the quietly brutal Joey and that detestable Captain Percival. The harrowing story was well told - credibly told by a man who knows the sea and ships - and it looked like we were on a voyage that HAD to have a rewarding ending. And so it went, until the final two pages, where Nichols sticks a knife in our guts, seemingly gleeful over our duplicity, our trust in him. An act of savagery by Joey two-thirds into the story ultimately leads to the revengeful killing of our heroes Boden and Moyle just when it looks like they're going to get rewarded for their strength of character and grit displayed throughout the adventure, and for their heroism toward the end that saves the others from certain doom. Then in the book's Epilogue, he gives another twist to that knife in our bellies. He describes how the characters he led us to hate live even more happily ever after, and more prosperously. All, that is, except Joey, who would have been only a bit player if his acts were not of such disastrous consequences. What in the world was Peter Nichols thinking of? If writers stray so foolishly, don't editors today dissuade them - especially new writers like Nichols - from such folly? If they can't dissuade, they can make demands. Famous authors have been induced to make serious changes in plot: "We won't publish it like it is," is an ultimatum that has been heard by many writers. The fiercely obstinate and already famous Paul Gallico's epic "The Snow Goose" had a slant that the editor would not accept: Gallico's essence of the story that Frith and Philip had developed a romantic relationship had to go or ELSE!, said the editor. Gallico grudgingly accepted the editor's demand, which was essential to the credibility of the story. That should have been done here, and a fine book would have been the result.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. like the arctic itself . . . beauty, but no warmth

By Todd, compulsive reader

I have read that this book was written by a first-time novelist, Peter Nichols. If so, the author has a gift for (1) realistic depictions of life at sea, and in the frozen north, (2) accurately portraying the over-the-top narcissism of the rich in the 1930s, and (3) help us get to know characters in this meandering tale that eventually let us down.

What I liked: I enjoyed this book, well, most of it, for it's unflinching look at human frailties, and of dreams of adventure gone off the rails, destroyed by hubris, as many dreams are. The development of the characters was entertaining and realistic, even the unsympathetic ones, such as the captain and his family. And the descriptions of arctic scenes evoked the beauty that this place must offer, to those willing to pay its price of admission.

What I didn't like: The book too a bit long to get started, and by this I don't mean the boat sailing; I refer to the meandering path the characters take until they finally meet up and begin to interact. I am OK with unlikeable characters, I feel that serve to balance the more sympathetic ones, such as Will Boden, the protagonist in this story. But more than just a tragic ending, which you kind of expect given the run-up to these events; instead this story ends in a way that leaves you question the investment in time you've made, in going along on this journey of disaster (no spoilers). Kind of like hiring someone who has an impressive resume, only to catch them stealing from you after you give them a job. The commentary on human nature imbedded in this story is at best thought-provoking, and at worst profoundly disturbing. I really liked another reviewer's description: "Ernest Shackleton meets Heart of Darkness." Very apt.

Give it a try, if you want something to think about. But before you're through, your journey will take you to the dark side.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good reading--until...

By Andy O'Hara

While slow in the beginning, "Voyage to the North Star" is worth bearing. It's well written, descriptive, and the action is well described, although the characters are a bit plastic and inconsistent. But then there's the ending and here a good book goes awry. It is almost as though the author got tired of writing, or perhaps his doctor told him he only had a week to live and had better finish his book--pronto. Worse, it seems the author forgot everything he had written until then. I have no problem with--in fact, I delight in--a surprise ending. In this case, however, Nichols either tried too hard or didn't try at all--I found myself holding the book out, exclaiming, "What? This doesn't even make sense." It's sad to see a good piece of writing hastily thrown away by a scrambled, confused ending. Further, while the irony of what became of the surviving characters was not lost on me, it was overdone to the point of becoming silly. In this case, the author would have done well to simply erase the final couple of chapters and leave us hanging, rather than hanging us with so flat an ending.

An old-fashioned adventure yarn. . . [Nichols's] story pulses with action that is given an extra measure of verisimilitude by his deep knowledge of boats and the sea and the watery landscapes of the Far North. - Richard Bernstein, New York Times. As harrowing as a tale by Jack London, its vision as haunting as Joseph Conrad's, this masterful novel of maritime adventure crosses the paths of Carl Schenck, a ruthless industrialist whose wealth is as fabulous as his big-game hunter's appetite for blood is limitless, and Will Boden, a seaman down on his luck. It is Schenck's blind resolve to launch an Arctic safari that affords Boden the opportunity to do what no seasoned seaman would, and flouting his own foreboding, he signs on with the Lodestar, a yacht luxuriously appointed for pleasure but drastically ill-equipped for navigating the Arctic. Together, these two men are bound in an epic misadventure that confronts them with not only the perils of the polar seas but also a horrifying moral disaster. "Its major themes consciously derived from those of Conrad and Melville. . . [it is] a fiercely eventful novel." - New York Times; "A finely crafted adventure and a crackling good read." - Chicago Tribune; "An impressive first novel. . . A literary page-turner that is driven as much by ideas and the writing as plot and characters." - USA Today.

.com "Boden understood suddenly that his reluctant fascination with Schenck came from the man's deliberate heedlessness, in all things, to obstacles that would be so apparent to others." Will Boden, the hero of Peter Nichols's *Voyage to the North Star*, is not the only one fascinated by this reckless and flamboyant millionaire. After all, New York circa 1932 is short on opulence, and Carl Schenck's sexy yachts and publicity stunts are front-page news. Rich from his invention of a manure mover, Schenck is determined to thumb his nose at the old-money fops who have lost everything in the depression. On top of that, his taste for Teddy Roosevelt-inspired danger verges on madness. When an African big-game hunt proves too tame, he decides to take an ill-prepared yacht to the Arctic to shoot seals, caribou, polar bears, walrus, whales--whatever offers the most kicks. (He also plans to dynamite his way through the icebergs.) Boden, a disgraced sea captain, has spent enough time in Arctic waters to know they are no place for a luxury yacht. But ever since he lost his ship (due to an overcautious maneuver), his personal life has been crumbling. An old salt named Moyle convinces him that a return to the Arctic, even with Schenck, would be preferable to suicide. He laughed again, and then let himself think of what it was like up there: the beautiful severity; the wildflowers coming up through the tundra desolation; the drunk-seeming blaze of the northern lights. Above all, the ice: the fantastic bergs, some of them the size of Central Park; the rivers and deltas of glacial ice so big and so slowed in time's aspic that his own brief mortal concerns fell away to insignificance until he felt washed clean. Boden signs on as a stoker, but it soon becomes apparent that the *Lodestar* is in need of his knowledge of the powerful, sublime elements of the far north--the ice floes, bent-light optical illusions, ferocious bears, deadly cold, and obfuscating fog. It also needs someone to stand up to an owner who will risk the lives of everyone on board for a trophy rack of antlers or for the thrill of firing a harpoon needlessly into an iceberg. Nichols's self-assured first novel cruises at high speed, with plenty of grip-your-chair action. And as with icebergs, the crashes between characters draw their strength from what lurks beneath the surface. --John PomyicsanyiFrom Publishers WeeklyThis is a first novel by the author of *Sea Change*, an account of his solo voyage across the Atlantic, and here, too, Nichols writes of the sea and ships with great feeling and accuracy. With his lean but telling style, he is as convincing on seafaring, navigation and weather as Hemingway is on big game hunting or bullfighting. His protagonist is Will Boden, a skilled seaman down on his luck in depression-era New York. In a moment of ill judgment, he once abandoned the ship he was captaining, and is now reduced to scraping a living, literally, on the waterfront. Along comes Carl Schenck, a wealthy industrialist who wants to ape his idol, Teddy Roosevelt, as a big game hunter, but fears it's all been done. He hits upon the notion to take the beautiful luxury yacht he has just acquired up into the Arctic to hunt for seal, bear, whatever he can find, and among the motley crew he assembles, including a skipper who is a fake British naval officer, is poor Will. Thus begins an adventure yarn alternately scary and hilarious, as Schenck takes ludicrous risks, the weather closes in and the ill-starred expedition begins to fall apart. Nichols shows an amazingly practiced hand for a fledgling novelist as he moves his large and vividly sketched cast through an ever more threatening series of disasters. The crowning event, brought on by Schenck himself, does stretch credulity, but otherwise the narrative tension is tight as a wire hawser, and Nichols's eye for the natural beauty and terrors of the icy North unerring. Only a rather perfunctory windup, which snatches dire defeat from the jaws of seeming victory, disappoints slightly. Still, this is an utterly gripping read, a tale that says a great deal about the mystique of men and the sea even as it entertains. (Nov.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThis immensely satisfying first novel from memoirist Nichols (*Sea Change: Alone Across the Atlantic in a Wooden Boat*) begins in 1932 with wacky big-game hunter Carl Schenck gunning for to kill "prodigious" animals in the grand manner of Teddy Roosevelt. Even if he has to mount an Arctic safari to do so. And ends with a perilous struggle for survival in the far north. In between, Schenck, a man who seemingly can buy anything and anyone he wants, prepares for the expedition that will pit him against Will Boden, a former sea captain who has lost everything dear to him: a boat, wife, and reputation. And hungers only for a second chance. Nichols spins a powerful story crammed with historical details and biting social commentary, awe-inspiring for its knowledge of ships and the sea, deft in its depiction of eccentric figures and harrowing events, and exhilarating for the quality of writing and the story's moral depth. A gripping novel of blood lust, human folly, and desperate hope in the tradition of Melville, Conrad, and Jack London; highly recommended for both public and academic libraries. ARonnie H. Terpening, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.