

Longitude

DAVA SOBEL

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Anyone alive in the eighteenth century would have known that “the longitude problem” was the thorniest scientific dilemma of the day—and had been for centuries.

The quest for a solution has occupied scientists for the better part of two centuries when, in 1714, England’s Parliament upped the ante by offering a king’s ransom to anyone whose method or device proved successful. One man, John Harrison, dared to imagine a mechanical solution—a clock that would keep precise time at sea, something no clock had ever been able to do on land.

LONGITUDE is the dramatic human story of an epic scientific quest, and of Harrison’s forty-year obsession with building his perfect timekeeper, known today as the chronometer. Full of heroism and chicanery, brilliance and the absurd, it is also a fascinating brief history of astronomy, navigation, and clockmaking. Through Dava Sobel’s consummate skill, LONGITUDE opens many new windows on our world.

“The marine chronometer is a glorious and fascinating object, but it is not a simple one, and its explanation calls for a writer as skilled with words as the watchmakers were with their tools: happily just such a writer has been found in Dava Sobel.”

—Patrick O’Brian, author of the Aubrey/Maturin naval series

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Running Time: Approx. 4.5 Hours • Unabridged

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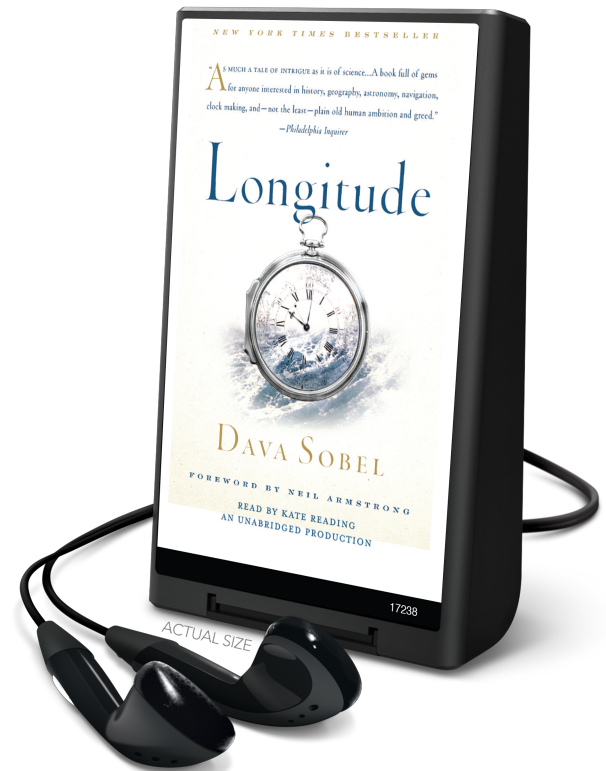
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