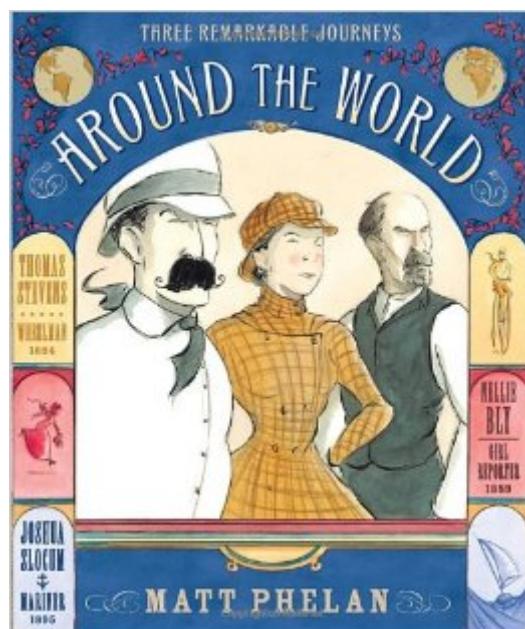


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Around The World



Synopsis

A Scott O'Dell Award-winning graphic novelist follows three dauntless adventurers on a Jules Verne-inspired challenge: circling the world, solo! As the nineteenth century wound down, a public inspired by the novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* clamored for intrepid adventure. The challenge of circumnavigating the globe as no one ever had before--a feat assuring fame if not fortune--attracted the fearless in droves. Three hardy spirits stayed the course: In 1884, former miner Thomas Stevens made the journey on a bicycle, the kind with a big front wheel. In 1889, pioneer reporter Nellie Bly embarked on a global race against time that assumed the heights of spectacle, ushering in the age of the American celebrity. And in 1895, retired sea captain Joshua Slocum quietly set sail on a thirty-six-foot sloop, braving pirates and treacherous seas to become the first person to sail around the world alone. With cinematic pacing and deft, expressive art, acclaimed graphic novelist Matt Phelan weaves a trio of epic journeys into a single bold tale of three visionaries who set their sights on nothing short of the world.

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Customer Reviews

I very much enjoyed these tales of three explorers who circled the globe. As the author notes in the end, his original intent was to simply chronicle their journeys in the first person, but he later became more interested in their inner motivations. This is something that evolves throughout the book, with the final story (#3) being the richest and most relatable of the three. Nellie Bly's story (#2) wasn't particularly relatable, but it was compelling in its own way. Although the text was dry for my taste on

occasion (hence the 4 stars), I particularly enjoyed the artist's depiction of personality and movement through the pen and ink and watercolor illustrations. I was enthralled by the drawings and found myself stuck at some points just looking at the subtleties and beauty conveyed by the art. One of my favorite pages is the one where he subtly merges the image of the miner's candle into that of the bicycle. I look forward to re-reading this book. Around the World is beautiful and enthralling and short -- my favorite kind of read.

Reason for Reading: I enjoy graphic biographies and while I wasn't too impressed with Matt Phelan's *Storm in the Barn*, thought I'd give him another go. This is the story of three late 19th century "around the world travelers". The book opens with the scene from Verne's famous book of the same name where Phileas Fogg makes his bet to travel around the world in 80 days. It was the publication of this book that inspired many real life adventurous types to set off and do the same thing. Told separately in three vignettes, the reader is introduced to the stories of three such adventurers, who each wrote a book documenting their travels. First up is Thomas Stevens a miner, who quits his job, takes up riding the new-fangled invention the bicycle and proceeds to travel around the world via bicycle (this was the penny-farthing bike at the time, though he rode the American version). Next is the story of Nellie Bly, Girl Reporter who set out to beat Phileas Fogg's time and travel the world in 74 days while sending home news reports. The American public went wild for her stories. Finally, we are told the story of Joshua Slocum, retired sea captain, who fixes up a dilapidated little boat into a sea-worthy sailing ship and travels the world by sea. Each one of the stories is interesting and while having the same theme, unique from one another. Rather than being just a retelling of events, Phelan has chosen to portray each journey through the person's ultimate reasons as to why they conducted the voyage, their driving force and their eventual personal rewards. An enjoyable read. Not overly exciting, but interesting nonetheless. I can't say I'm particularly fond of Phelan's artistic style; his colours are drab and his watercolours are wishy-washy to my sensibilities, but he is a well known illustrator and obviously many others do appreciate his work. Certainly a unique topic and combination of stories.

Written and illustrated by Matt Phelan, *AROUND THE WORLD* is a graphic novel that tells the story of three different 19th century individuals who traveled around the world in three very different ways. Up first is Thomas Stevens. Stevens was a miner who quit his job and took to riding a bicycle (a new invention at the time) and set out to ride around the world on his bicycle. The second traveler in the story is Nellie Bly, a female reporter who after reading Jules Verne's *AROUND THE WORLD*

IN 80 DAYS, set out to beat that record. The last story is that of Joshua Slocum, a retired sea captain who repairs an old boat and sets to sail at sea and eventually becoming the first man to sail around the world alone. Although a graphic novel, the book does a good job of illustrating the particular challenges and obstacles each of the individuals had to overcome to complete their tasks. Overall, while AROUND THE WORLD might not exactly be a riveting tale of adventure, it is entertaining and educational and provides the reader with a basic understanding about these three individuals who traveled around the world in three very different ways.

A friend purchased a copy of Around the World for me because she remembered how much I enjoyed another of Matt Phelanâ™s works, The Dust in the Barn. I am glad to say that I enjoyed Around the World just as much. It is actually three different stories told in one graphic novel. The stories follow Thomas Stevens (a cyclist or âœwheelmanâ•), Joshua Slocum (a mariner), and Nellie Bly (a news reporter) on their individual journeys around the world. Each trip was a real adventure and took place in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Travel was very different in those days since people didnâ™t yet fly in airplanes. For example, to cross an ocean, you had to take a boat â“ a long and sometimes perilous mode of travel. If you were working against the clock, as was the case with Nellie Bly, waiting for boats to even leave harbor sometimes added not just hours but days to your travel. Stevens wasnâ™t going for any type of speed record during his trip around the world, but he was the first to do so on the newly-invented bicycle. Slocum sailed his way around the continents, struggling with the perils of the sea as well as loneliness. Phelan does an excellent job of showing what made each individualâ™s trip unique and exciting. He is a very talented illustrator and tries to make every panel meaningful for the story. I especially enjoy the expressions he gives his characters as they display a lot of emotion. This book was more light-hearted than The Dust in the Barn due to the different subject matter, and young readers should enjoy the adventures of the three people portrayed.

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