



# The Proving Ground: The Inside Story of the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Boat Race

*G. Bruce Knecht*

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The waters between Sydney and Hobart are famously treacherous. No one is fooled by the clear skies. In the hours before the 1998 Sydney to Hobart race, skippers gathered for a weather briefing. An intense low pressure was predicted, but three different forecasts disagreed about the exact course of the stormy weather. No one was unduly alarmed and all decided to sail. But within hours the yachts were confronted with hurricane-force winds and waves the height of a five-storey building. Six sailors died; 55 were pulled from the water. Of the 115 boats that started, just 43 would finish. In Hobart, a memorial service replaced the legendary parties that normally follow the race. By focussing on a handful of yachts and those who crewed them, Bruce Knecht brilliantly recreates those dramatic hours and the stomach wrenching fear of those caught in the eye of the storm, battling, some forlornly, for their lives.

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