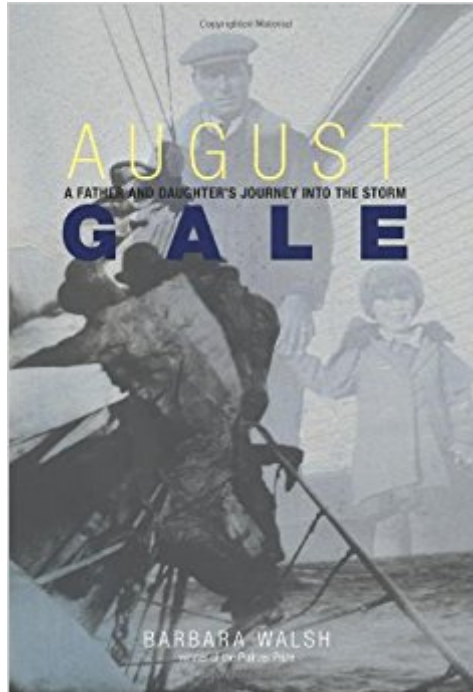


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August Gale: A Father And Daughter's Journey Into The Storm



Synopsis

Long before "The Perfect Storm" and Hurricane Sandy, the 1935 August Gale roared Northeast. The surf raged along the New York and New Jersey shores as the gale whirled toward Newfoundland. Waves as tall as three-story houses swamped ships; monster combers broke masts in two and swept every man on deck into the raging sea. Scores of fishermen disappeared when the "divil" descended on that August evening, and one Newfoundland village would never be the same. A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Barbara Walsh takes readers on an unforgettable voyage into her family history and her quest to face the storms she encounters there. Like "The Perfect Storm," August Gale is a dramatic story of the sea and the courageous men who fished for a living. A book that you won't want to put down and a terrific choice for book clubs and gifts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an outstanding book. Barbara Walsh has very skillfully meshed three related stories. First is that of the catastrophic 1935 gale that took the lives of 40 Newfoundland fishermen including her great-uncle "Paddy" Walsh and several of her cousins, second is the story of her grandfather Ambrose Walsh who had emigrated to NY from Newfoundland to start and later abandon his own family and third, the effect that Ambrose's actions had on her dad, Ronald and her uncle William Patrick (the namesake of the drowned fisherman) and their mother. The book alternates between the three story lines in the context of and the author's trip, accompanied by her dad, to Marystown, Newfoundland during which she unraveled the story of the gale and she and her dad came to know their relatives. All the story lines and the Marystown trip are well written and compelling. Even better

they are seamlessly woven together. Walsh is particularly strong on the human cost of these tragedies. Her descriptions of the grief of the women and children over the loss of their fathers, husbands and brothers and their plight in the following winter is especially poignant. The images she describes are haunting. Equally well done is her writing about the effects of Ambrose's abandonment on Ambrose's wife and well as on the author's dad and uncle. I simply can't recommend this highly enough.

Barbara Walsh has crafted a riveting piece of nonfiction by skillfully weaving two lines of parallel events within three generations of her family. The author's Pulitzer Prize-winning research skills are showcased in the narrative's historical accuracy and honesty. Her humanity and compassion ground the work somewhere closer to the heart, reinforcing the idea that we are all the sum of our experiences and our decisions. There are inherited traits and tendencies, but we each build our castle (or shack) on those foundations. Here is the story of a man who found the courage to be a better man than the example he was given and nurtured that bravery in others. I hope many more people will read the book, taking solace and strength from the lives and events it depicts. Readers will continue to weigh the wisdom of decisions made against their consequences long after the last page has been turned.

Be prepared for a compelling - and heartwarming - read that you won't want to put down. I read it in three sessions on my kindle, only because I didn't want it to end. Could have read it in one night. Barbara not only has a great eye for detail, she has a great ear. The conversations in this book are as riveting as the action that takes place during the horrible storm. A great adventure story, and a wonderful family story. As good a read as I've enjoyed in a long time.

This book is a recent favorite of mine! Read it w my book club and then we got to Skype w the author!, she was delightful and answered all our questions honestly and w humor! I loved how the story was based on a real families' story over three generations. I enjoyed learning about a historical event I knew nothing's about (the Gale that claimed so many lives from one little village in Newfoundland). I really enjoyed the honest complexity of family relationships weaved throughout the stories. I highly recommend this book! It was a great summer read!

The problem with many books that have separate but entwining story lines --each with their own set of characters and sometimes set in different time periods -- is one of those lines often ends up being

far more compelling than the others. That can leave the reader flipping through chapters to find the "good stuff," skipping the weaker plot lines, and ending up with an unsatisfying literary experience. Not so with "August Gale." Barbara Walsh equally divides her considerable literary skills between detailing the lives of her ancestors, Irish immigrants who have settled in Newfoundland and make their living fishing in the 1930s, to exploring her own modern-day family's journey to not just come to terms with the past but embrace it. The summer North Atlantic storm of the title is the story's center. But really, this is a book about family ties and disappointments, and how the past is always present. Walsh vividly portrays the Marystown fishing village, a place where the women wait for their men to return from the sea; you can smell the salt in the air and hear the wind blowing against the wooden shutters. A Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, she obviously did considerable research on Irish immigrant life and the independent operator fishing industry in the 1930s -- which has much in common with the small boat captains and workers in "Perfect Storm" (although they certainly have better weather monitoring equipment today). If you love: 1.) memoirs about family life and personal discovery or 2.) books about the sea or the Irish experience in the New World, you should try "August Gale."

Barbara Walsh came to our library in Pelham, NH & after listening to her descriptive reading of the August Gale, I was impressed & purchased her book. I was in awe with the description & detail of the fishermen & their gear. I read it in two days, a very good read & I highly recommend it.

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