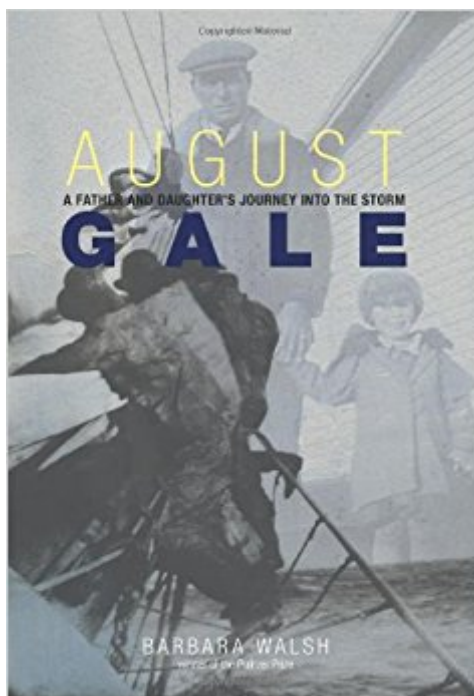


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August Gale: A Father And Daughter's Journey Into The Storm



Walsh's lyrical story of her father and their journey into the tempest is gripping, heartwarming - and memorable. A terrific read. — Jackie MacMullan, former Sports Illustrated and Boston Globe writer and author of *Magic and Bird: Basketball's Awed Couple*

August Gale: A Father and Daughter's Journey into the Storm is a wonderful holiday gift for male and female readers. High school students are also enjoying the book in their English classes or as a summer read. A dramatic sea story and haunting memoir, *August Gale* has also become a popular book club selection and "community read." To connect with readers, Barbara Walsh is Skyping into book clubs and classrooms around the world. To set up a Skype session, please contact her at bwalshauthor@gmail.com

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*."

When I think about characters for days or weeks after finishing a book, and wonder about how they're doing, I know that the story has been a good one. It doesn't always mean that I've enjoyed the book. There have been some painful ones filled with characters who are very difficult to like (every single one of them)

that have stuck with me because the storytelling is so good. Those who peopled August Gale have been in and out of my mind for days, and they do not fall into that despicable category. They are people who could be members of my own extended family. Walsh does a good job of building the story, revealing just enough in each chapter to make the reader want to get to the next. I found myself as interested and touched by what developed among her father, her sisters, her half-sisters, her long-lost relatives in Newfoundland, and herself as I was concerning the residents of Marystown who lived and died through the August gale. That surprised me. When I started the book, I was a bit disappointed (and a little confused) to learn that the story was as much about the author as her ancestors. That disappointment and confusion quickly subsided, though, as I came to care about Barbara and her father. While no one can accurately reconstruct what happened in situations with no survivors, Walsh does a very good job creating believable scenarios from the facts she has gathered. My only complaints about the book have to do with what happened after the storm: I wanted to know more about the family members left behind. Without a lot to go on, I imagine that Walsh did the best she could, but I wished for more. A little more about Walsh's own family would have been welcome, too. I know that the book was about her father and his family, but I wanted to know her mother and sisters better.

I am always up for a good seafaring tale and *August Gale: A Father and Daughter's Journey* by Barbara Walsh, delivered that in addition to a multi-layered story of family betrayal and redemption. Walsh writes simply and directly of the tragedy of the hurricane on a small fishing village in Newfoundland and weaves the story around the emotional exploration of long held family secrets. This honest and touching journey adds a rich depth to the telling of the bit of regional history that has echoed down through the generations of the Walsh family. The plentiful family photographs and the maps and glossary were welcome aids to picturing the storm and environs.

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.

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