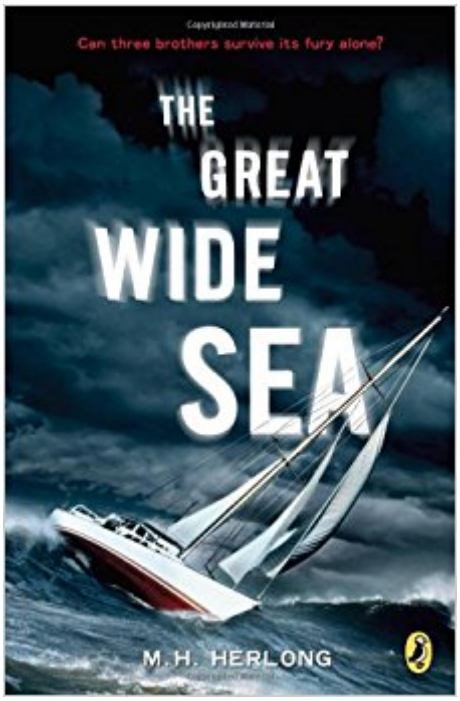
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The Great Wide Sea



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Synopsis

Ben, Dylan, and Gerry are still mourning their mother?s death when their dad decides to buy a boat and take them on a year-long sailing trip. Tensions flare between Ben and his father, but they gradually learn to live together in close quarters. Then one morning the boys wake up to discover their father has disappeared?and they are lost. What happened to him? Where are they? And what will they do when a terrible storm looms on the horizon?

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0660 (What’s this?)

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; 35492nd edition (May 13, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142416703

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 61 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #39,999 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Siblings #92 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying #173 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Survival Stories

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 7Ã¢â ¬â œ10Ã¢â ¬â •Ben Byron, 15, is angry. Just two months after the death of his mother in a car accident, his dad, crushed by the loss of his wife, sells their house and small boat and uses the money to buy the Chrysalis, a 30-foot sailboat. He uproots Ben and two younger sons for a yearlong tour of the Bahamas. Life goes as smoothly as it can for a while, despite the tension, chores, and close quarters. But one morning everything changesÃ¢â ¬â •their father disappears. When the boat heads into a terrible storm, Ben must act. Throughout the novel, the protagonist’s emotions ring true. Although the sailing details are a bit technical at times, Herlong spins an engrossing, suspenseful tale of survival.Ã¢â ¬â •Melyssa Malinowski, Kenwood High School, Baltimore, MD Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All

rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Starred Review Soon after their motherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s death, 15-year-old Ben and his two younger brothers are stunned when their father sells their home, buys a sailboat, and announces that they will live on board and cruise the Bahamas for the next year. Wrenched from everything he knows and forced to obey his father-captainÃ¢â ¬â„¢s orders, Ben starts out angry and finds no escape. As he says, Ã¢â ¬Å“We were always together.Ã¢â ¬Â• When their father sets a course for Bermuda and disappears overboard one night, the boys have little time to wonder if he jumped or fell before theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re struggling to stay afloat in a fierce Atlantic storm. Lost at sea in a damaged boat, they find their way to an island where they are stranded with little food, little water, and little hope of rescue. HerlongÃ¢â ¬â„¢s first book is a great survival story and a fine portrayal of family relationships in a time of crisis. Justifiably angry, yet logical, reflective, and at times compassionate, Ben makes a sympathetic protagonist, and his brothers are no less appealing. With enough detail to make the settings real and a minimum of metaphor, the first-person narrative is clean and direct. This page-turner of an adventure story is also a convincing, compelling, and ultimately moving novel. Grades 6-10. --Carolyn Phelan --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

SPOILER ALERT--I loved this book. I'd rank it up there with some of the great YA books of survival and adventure, like The Island of the Blue Dolphins, that I loved as a kid. And as an adult and a parent, I appreciated it even more than I would have then. There were a few places where I questioned the credibility of some of the details (taking an illegal speargun to the Bahamas, the fact that the dad didn't look harder for his kids, the geographical likelihood that they would have been found, etc.), but I can overlook all of these details because it was such a good story about strength, coming of age, family and love.

More mature middle grade readers and young adult readers will love this emotionally charged adventure/survival/family drama. A loving but misguided father decides the best way for he and his sons to deal with the grief of losing their wife/mother is to spend a year sailing in the Caribbean. When the father disappears and a storm sends the boat many miles off coarse, Ben, the oldest son, must try to save what is left of his family and deal with his fury and hatred for his father who he is convinced committed suicide and left the boys to die. A nail biting read for adults as well as teens.

The spectacular achievement of this book is that it shows dads what they look like to their teenage sons. It holds the mirror of your son’s eyes right up close, where all the unflattering things show. Then it shows us that our sons love us anyway. I finished the book, wiped a way a tear -- something I almost never need to do -- and hugged my sons.It is definitely a terrific sea yarn. Like all great books, it builds in some wise observations about life without being the least bit preachy. Perhaps that is because the wisdom comes through the voice of a fifteen-year old who, after struggling with dad, becomes the father figure through chance, or maybe through a choice (a question you will have to answer for yourself, Dad). There are also some sly allusions to Hemingway sea tales and to Hurricane Katrina (the author is from New Orleans), but maybe I just made that up.Read the two-page prologue and you will be hooked. Give it to your son. Give it to your Dad. Read it with your son, or for your husband, or your brother. Sail in your son’s boat (or your father, husband, or brother’s boat) for a while.

A few of my students picked this book for their survival unit. They loved this book.

one of my daughter’s favorites

I had to read this as a summer reading book and actually ended up liking it ! I got the 30 day free trial thing with audible so I also got the accompanying audiobook for free! Played it 3 times faster than usual and finished the book in 3 hours (Taking Breakis In-between)

"The Great Wide Sea." That’s just it--the great wide sea! You (the narrator) and your two younger brothers are alone--without a GPS system--on the great wide sea. It’s always possible to use the stars. After all, that’s what sailors did hundreds and hundreds of years ago. Let’s add a terrible storm, you know, that perfect storm with thirty-foot waves. Oh, lest I forget--it’s time for your watch and you discover that your dad is gone. Gone. And that storm is almost upon you."The Great Wide Sea" is one fantastic read/ride for the middle school group (I particularly had boys in mind, the ones who claim books are boring), for as I live and breathe, this book equals the Brian books by Gary Paulsen in intensity, character development, plot surprises, and quality writing. I could not read "The Sea" fast enough!As librarian in a PK3-8 school, I look for this kind of book to recommend to "reluctant" readers AND those readers who absolutely will appreciate my recommendations, regardless of genre. Put this one in the basket of action/adventure, for it is dynamic and jolting!One day Ben’s mother dies in a car accident. His father sells their home and everything in it, buys a

sailboat and takes the three boys, ages five, eleven, and fifteen for a year to sail around the hundreds of islands that make up the Bahamas. It’s a whirlwind of adventure that the boys do not want to take. Too much too soon, no time to adjust to the loss of their mother. Everyone must become sea worthy and learn a separate seagoing task, even Gerry, the youngest.Everything is fine, despite Ben’s growing resentment of his father, a man almost drowning in sorrow and guilt, until the morning that Ben gets up to take his place on duty and finds his father nowhere. Ben and Dylan, the middle brother, ride out the waves of this terrible storm, until they crash on a coral reef near an island and begin the second wave of their forced adventure--marooned on an island.This is an incredible story. For a first novel, not one word rings false, not in the first person narration or the details of the story. Not only is the novel filled with sometimes almost unbearable suspense, but educational details about sailing and the Bahamas themselves. I personally had no clue that the Bahamas were more than a couple of islands: hundreds of islands fill that geography.The story focuses on Ben and his growing maturity and acceptance of responsibility. I really came to like this character, as well as his brothers. With Ben I began to dislike the father more and more. A really good writer can do that, mold and bend opinions and affect reader projections. Not at any time did I know what to expect. Even the ending is unexpected.No pirates, no sharks--well, just one or two--just a sailboat and three boys and a man. What can go wrong?

Incredible.A very heartbreaking and tense read. I don’t know if it is because I’m a father or not. But I could totally see how it’d be thrilling for a teen or young adult to read it.And as a sailor I only questioned one technical issue. But the story won out!

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