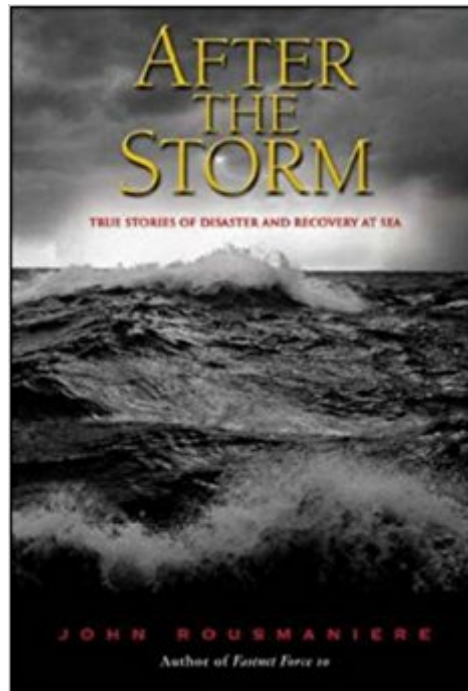




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After The Storm : True Stories Of Disaster And Recovery At Sea



Synopsis

An exploration of loss and survival by one of America's finest nautical writers *After the Storm* is John Rousmaniere's most ambitious work ever, the unique expression of a master storyteller and authority on seamanship who has survived storms at sea. Each of the book's stories of seafaring disaster—many little known, all exciting and of deep human interest—presents a broad human drama. Rousmaniere tells of the hopes and choices that put these sailors in harm's way. He takes readers into the gales themselves with authoritative knowledge of horrific weather and the split-second decisions that seamen must make. Finally, he explores the consequences of these disasters for survivors, rescuers, families, communities, and in some cases nations. The pursuit of these elusive strands leads the reader deep into our ambivalent relationship with the sea as both "destroyer and preserver."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In his latest, Rousmaniere (*Fastnet*, *Force 10*; *The Annapolis Book of Seamanship*) reconstructs 12 tales of sea wrecks and near-misses from captains' logs and eyewitnesses, which are as sad as they are compelling to read. The poet Shelley's romance with the sea (and his life) comes to an end from careless sailing and a black squall; an African-American church congregation is decimated when the side-wheeler *Portland* rolls in Massachusetts Bay; during the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, sailors of the supply ship *Pollux* teeter between heroism and madness while their ship breaks apart on a rocky shelf. But as the title indicates, this book is more than a simple curio of casualty. Having

survived his own brush with a watery death in 1979, Rousmaniere arrays in these remarkable stories a study of the reactions to sudden calamity, be they acts of sheer heroism, mute observation or a helpless slide into panic, and the lasting misfortune of those who survive the dead. The book is not without religious overtones, and peppered throughout are insightful digressions into biography, literary criticism and the composition of popular hymns. At once ominously desperate and unerringly hopeful, this book is a wise, generous read. Photos and maps not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Rousmaniere, the author of 18 books, sailed in the 1979 Fastnet Race in which five boats were sunk and 15 sailors died in a storm near England. He has gathered here 10 electrifying true stories that describe disasters at sea. They contain what he identifies as the five elements of a storm: its demanding weather; the seamanship needed to cope with it; the intense stress it places on victims and survivors; the beliefs that play a part in it at every stage; and the consequences of storms for the victims' community. Included are the chronicle of the schooner Ariel, on which Percy Shelley was killed in 1822; the story of the passenger steamer Portland, which sunk in 1898 in Massachusetts Bay, killing almost 200 people; and the wreck of the supply ship Pollux off the coast of Newfoundland during World War II. Every item is engrossing reading. George Cohen Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

John Rousmaniere relates the historical facts that surrounded each disaster and arranges the stories in historical sequence. This background information adds depth to the stories of sailing disasters by relating them to one another. We learn how sailing and attitudes toward sailing influenced the events of each disaster and we get a better understanding of the sailors involved.

Magnificent book - extremely well written and thoroughly researched.

Having recently read "After The Storm," a collection of stories that has been available for more than 10 years, I recently emailed the author, John Rousmaniere, a friend, with some commentary. Here's a summary: 1. "After The Storm" is a magnificent research effort, diligently documented, and yes, as meaningful today as when these adventures occurred many years ago. I am recommending the book to my friends in the boating community, not as a trade book but as an educational text. Why? Because these are friends and professional colleagues who regularly contend with the hazards, vicissitudes, and aftermath of

intimidating maritime weather. There is much to learn within the pages of *After The Storm*.² For any sailor (not so much for landlubbers) there is considerable entertainment value in *After the Storm*.³ Of course nearly all sailors have their own storm stories, but they could not possibly match these for excitement, angst, and history. For example, on a cheerless, cold, and wet New England Thanksgiving weekend in 2014, the author's analysis of the loss of the side-wheeler Portland on Thanksgiving 1898, is a fitting, terrifying, and appropriate anniversary story, indeed.³ Mr. Rousmaniere's notes pertaining to each story are nearly as entertaining and as informative as the stories themselves. With each note, he references page numbers in the stories; this facilitated my re-reading certain relevant passages in the stories to fulfill my curiosity and round out a satisfying post-storm historical and intellectual analysis (a.k.a. *post-mortem* in many cases, as some of the stories ended tragically in deaths of the *heroes*).⁴ Mr. Rousmaniere's last chapter, "The Ulysses Generation," is not history. It's current events. From this day forward, every time we read a report about some courageous (or stupidly arrogant) sailor risking all in an ocean adventure -- and we read about this almost daily in the boating news -- we will consider the author's careful analysis and deductions of historic storm stories. There's more to come, I suspect; I will personally maintain a sharp lookout for "After The Storm Vol II". Captain Bernie Weiss Atlantic Yacht Delivery.com

Be forewarned if you purchase "After the Storm" expecting it to be another in the recent spate of books recounting tales of nautical disasters. It does focus on ten separate instances of seaborne mayhem dating from the 1820s to the 1990s. But instead of including straightforward narrative accounts, author John Rousmaniere is more concerned with the literary and spiritual aspects of such events. The common thread that runs through these tales is that for the most part they all either affected or were commented upon by notable literary personalities, from Mary Shelley to Robert Louis Stevenson to Joseph Conrad and others. So much so that the accounts of the disasters themselves take a back seat to describing their social, psychological, religious and even political effects. All in all there is nothing necessarily wrong with Rousmaniere's approach, except that its appeal will be limited to the interest that the reader has in the extraneous subject matter. Unfortunately, the book's subtitle, "True Stories of Disaster and Recovery at Sea," leads one to believe that it is a collection of adventure tales, which is really not the case. Overall, I would recommend that potential readers closely scrutinize the summaries of this book's subject matter to determine if it will appeal to them.

This is a book full of informative, detailed and engaging stories about disasters and storms at sea. Rousmaniere wrote this book some years after he experienced and wrote about, the tragic 1979 Fastnet yacht race disaster (Fastnet, Force 10). He dissects each from the perspective of a yacht racer, seafarer, philosopher and theologian. He details the causes and factors leading up to the events and the aftereffects in communities and the world. In so doing, he lets out his own heart and soul. If you are interested in just the stories, you'll have to skip portions of the text. If you want to know "the rest of the story", then this book is for you. It is a book that I take off the shelf and revisit when the figurative storms of my life need to be put back into perspective.

great! Nice and valuable. Excellent for cutting home baked bread. arrive on time, my parents need it,

I enjoy reading sea stories such as "Working on the Edge", but it was a real chore to get through the maze of details which seemed to be included just to make the book 'thick' and did nothing to really add to the 'story'. Pass on this one and spend your money on something written as less of a text book.

The author goes beyond the simple description of a sea disaster and approaches the subject much as an NTSB accident investigator would look at the reason behind the accident.

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