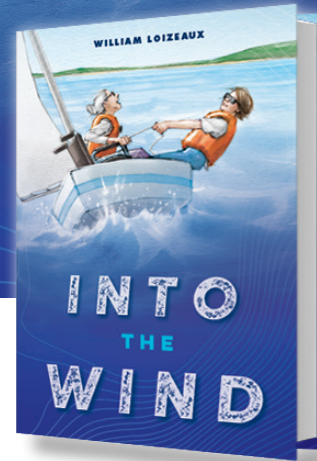


INTO THE WIND

by William Loizeaux



Discussion Guide

1. Why does sailing become so important for Rusty? Do you have a hobby or activity that is very important to you? Why is it important?
2. Perhaps we might say that Hazel is “disabled” because she can only walk short distances and mainly gets around in a wheelchair. But what is she able to do? What does she think of her limitations? What other words might you use to describe her?
3. Hazel is much older than Rusty, so why do they become friends? Do you know any older people who are, or might become, a close friend to you? Why?
4. Why do you think Rusty’s sister Lizzy is so angry at him for the first half of the story?
5. In her letter to Rusty, his mom writes that she’s been “very depressed,” according to her doctor. Do you know of anyone—perhaps even yourself—who has been very sad and depressed for reasons that are hard to figure out? What might we do—or not do—to help a person who is depressed?
6. All the characters in the book live on an island. What’s different about living on an island from living on the mainland? Would you like to live on an island? Why or why not?
7. Rusty is proud that he can use and understand words like “heading” and “close-hauled.” After the end of the story, there is a Glossary of Nautical Terms. Are there any words there that are new and interesting to you? Try using two or three of them in a sentence.



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Book Details

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8. Why do you think the book is called *Into the Wind*? Can you think of another possible title?
9. Near the end of the story, on page 132, Hazel tells Rusty, “You’ve grown!” How has Rusty grown? What has he learned? About himself? About Hazel? Or from Hazel? How has he changed from the beginning of the story?
10. Sadly, Hazel dies at the end. But does she, in some way, live on? Why does Rusty tell us this story?

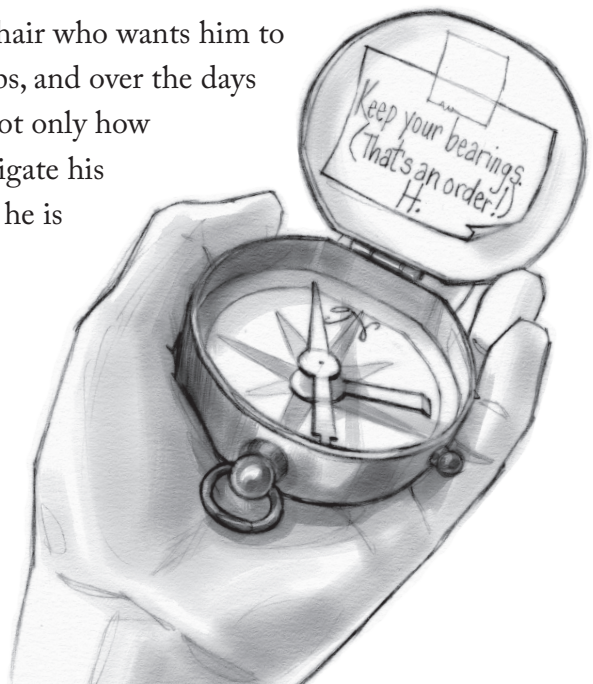
About William Loizeaux

The author’s childhood friendship with a feisty aunt, who loved painting and sailing, inspired him to write *Into the Wind*. He is an award-winning author of books for children and adults, as well as stories and essays. His children’s novel *Wings* received the 2006 ASPCA Henry Bergh Award and was the 2006 Golden Kite Honor Book for Fiction. His memoir *Anna: A Daughter’s Life* was a New York Times Notable Book, and his novel *The Tumble Inn* was the grand prize winner at the 2015 New York Book Festival. He has been writer-in-residence at Johns Hopkins and Boston University. He lives with his wife in Boston, Massachusetts. You can discover more about him and his works at www.williamloizeaux.com.

Praise for *Into the Wind*

INTO THE WIND is a real treasure, a book that grabs your attention on the first page and doesn’t let you go until the very last paragraph, when you just might decide to read it all over again. This is the story of Rusty, an island boy trying to fix up an old catboat and teach himself how to sail during the worst summer of his life. Into the midst of this comes a strange old lady in a wheelchair who wants him to take her sailing. An unexpected friendship develops, and over the days and weeks of that difficult summer Rusty learns not only how to care for his boat and sail it, but also how to navigate his own tough times and troubled waters, until at last he is sailing with the wind.

—Reeve Lindbergh, author of more than
two dozen books for kids and adults



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Synopsis of the Book

It's shaping up to be a rotten summer for 10-year-old Rusty, a sailing buff who lives on an island off the New England coast. He's just flunked math and has to go to summer school. His older sister is bossier than ever. Worst of all, his mom is far away on the mainland—undergoing treatment for her sudden, confusing, and exhausting “sadness”—while his dad struggles to keep the household together. Rusty's only refuge is in caring for and teaching himself to sail a small, beloved sailboat.

While working on his boat at the village dock one evening, Rusty meets Hazel, a feisty old lady in a wheelchair. Hazel, a local artist from an old sailing family, asks—no, demands—that Rusty take her sailing. He refuses. She argues. And an unlikely friendship begins.

Hazel hires Rusty to help her with household tasks on summer afternoons. Between cleaning, painting, and cutting weeds, Rusty bonds with Hazel over shared lunches, watermelon seed spitting, and their mutual love of sailing. When Rusty does eventually take Hazel sailing, they come to better know and feel what connects them, even as her life nears its end and his is just beginning. *Into the Wind* is a poignant story about loss and love in a boy's life, and the surprising and sustaining bonds that can grow between the old and young.



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