

SPORTS FICTION: IF BRADY HAD NEVER REPLACED BLEDSOE // THE POWER OF SHALANE FLANAGAN

# Globe Magazine

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Spreading kindness  
on the Marathon  
bombing's fifth  
anniversary.  
BY DENISE RICHARD

The North Atlantic  
right whale is in grave  
danger of extinction.

**CAN ANYONE SAVE THE RIGHT WHALE?  
INSIDE AN UNUSUAL EFFORT**

BY KATHRYN MILES



# Through Rough Seas

BY LAYA MARTINEZ



**R**obert, the passenger on our 41-foot yacht, was screaming. “We’re going to die! What’s wrong with you two? Why are you smiling? We’re all going to die!”

My husband, John, and I swallowed our grins for Robert’s sake, but this was our kind of afternoon — biblical. Six-foot waves crashed over us as the unexpected storm on the Chesapeake Bay intensified. Wind whipped our hair. Rain pelted our faces.

Danger, fear, excitement — I loved it.

Would we die? It was certainly possible that this storm would be our last. And I had no regrets. My relatives would be devastated but vindicated. They would say, “As we feared, God has punished Laya for her terrible sin.”

You see, John is not a Jew. Marrying him was the greatest crime possible in my ultra-Orthodox family. Unforgivable. Blasphemous. Insane.

Before I met John, I knew without a doubt that I would marry a *Talmud Chacham* (Torah scholar) and raise my Jewish children in my Jewish home, and that because I had done so, God would reward me from heaven.

But then I fell in love. I didn’t seek it out. The whole situation was absurd, a disaster. I had lived a blameless Orthodox life, dedicated to serving God. Yet it became impossible to live without John. After seven anguished years, we married, and I knew my family would never accept me again.

I had cast myself out to sea for love.

My relatives thought it was madness. Or Satan. Why else would anyone give up a life of safety for something as reckless as love?

“Tie yourselves down!” John commanded.

Robert started to cry.

If I had resisted love, I would have gone from the house of my father to the house of my Jewish husband, always protected. I would never have started my own companies or flirted with financial ruin — or become a success. I would never have discovered the thrill of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Darwin,

or too many others to name. After a lifetime of not finding answers in the Torah and the Talmud, I was blown away by thinkers who wielded a power no physical storm could match.

The box with our raft, medical equipment, and survival gear came loose and exploded open against the deck. John radioed the Coast Guard. The staticky voice on the other end was just barely audible: “— can’t help — overburdened — overturned boat — aiding others.”

*We are truly on our own*, I thought as I watched our lifeboat blow away. I was OK with that.

If John had play-acted his conversion, we could have returned to the fold. Like people everywhere, many in the Orthodox community did what was necessary to belong: covering windows with blackout curtains so nosy neighbors couldn’t see the blue glow of forbidden tele-

visions, eating *treif* (non-kosher) food when they thought no one was looking, praying to a God they didn’t truly believe in so that they could stay in the community.

But my religious faith had taught me that only God mattered. So I faced the storm head-on. I said to my God, *I must do this. I can’t live without him. Do with me what you will.*

And now here we were. I would die with no regrets. I would die with the man I loved — and Robert. Poor Robert!

The wind shifted. John managed to turn the boat toward shore in the still-angry sea. After five hours, we finally reached the dock, exhausted but exhilarated.

Robert leapt onto dry land, probably never to leave it again. “We’re alive! I’m alive!” He ran for the clubhouse. John and I looked back at the churning sea. It seethed before us, awesome in its power.

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