
Source 3**Storm at Sea**

Claire Francis is sailing alone across the Atlantic when she encounters gale force winds for the second time.

If the first gale was unpleasant, this one was appalling. Not only was I feeling unprepared for another blow so soon, but I was already exhausted from changing sails throughout the night. And, needless to add, I was soaking wet. But at least I could do something about my wet clothes and, full of anticipation, I went below to search out some dry ones. It was an impossible job. Every time I put my hand into a locker it came out wet and, as I discovered more and more dripping garments, my heart sank further and further. Out of piles of wet jeans, soaking sweaters, and clammy socks I salvaged one suit of polar underwear and a jersey. These I carefully hung on the clothes line over the stove where I defied a wave to reach them. One day when all the world was dry, I would put on those wonderful clothes and feel that life was approximately a hundred times better.

The movements of the boat were severe. She would rush at a wave, leap off the top, and then crash down on to the other side, give a quick roll or flip, then rush at another. Sometimes she found nothing but air as she leapt off a crest and there would be a ghastly moment of silence before a terrible juddering crash as the bows hit water again. At times like that it was easy to imagine that the mast had just broken or the hull split in two, for it seemed impossible that any boat could take such a beating. Water was streaming over her decks and her motion was as wild as a washing machine's. Like a dirty dishcloth I was spun rinsed, and tumbled about until I should have been whiter than white. I tried wedging myself in my bunk but nearly got thrown out, so I tied myself in and lay there in a state of mental paralysis, allowing no thoughts to enter my mind. I heard a banging and crashing sound above the racket of the gale as the boat jerked and gyrated but was too tired to go and investigate. Even if I had known that the loo had broken loose I wouldn't have minded much. But then another noise came to my bleary attention and this one could not be ignored. Something was hitting against the hull and even before I looked I knew what it would be. I had tied a sail down along the deck and, sure enough, the weight of water had pulled it free so that most of it was trailing in the sea. Five minutes later I had the sail below and another boot full of water.

If life was bleak then, it was bleaker three hours later. I allowed myself to become excited at the sight of a clear sky ahead and, quite certain the wind would drop, waited expectantly. The sun came out, the clouds disappeared, and then, to my dismay, the wind blew as strongly as ever, if not stronger.

