

Minding the Light

Suzanne Woods Fisher

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Backed by extensive research, this historical Christian romance welcomes readers into the world of nineteenth century Nantucket, where whalers and Quakers brush elbows and the church rules over all conduct. Fisher uses the problems native to the time to create a powerful conflict that leads to love.

The tale starts at the docks, with the return of Captain Reynolds Macy—Ren, to those who know him. After a six-year absence, he is shocked to find that he and his wife, Jane, have twins. Jane collapses in his arms; her terrified sister, Daphne, tries to help.

In the captain's absence, Jane has become overly dependent on laudanum to calm her nerves. Ren's business is on the brink of disaster; Jane's mother has ostracized her from the Quaker church. When Jane dies suddenly, Daphne and Ren are left to pick up the pieces.

The two slowly become closer in a desperate effort to understand what happened to Jane and to protect the children. Daphne's strength comforts and attracts Ren, but the risk of financial ruin may force him back out to sea. More plot driven than romantic, the book shows how love can quietly grow in the midst of great turmoil.

The book's characters are flawed in profoundly human ways. They make poor decisions, but they wish to be better. They learn to judge a man by his merit, rather than by his skin color or family relationships. Daphne draws from her faith for comfort and strength, while others weaponize their church, using it to exclude and ostracize. The island—where almost everyone is related and laudanum is a frequently prescribed drug—is ably rendered.

A glossary, historical notes, and book club questions are provided to help readers further understand the historical context of the story, the whaling industry, and the Quaker faith. *Minding the Light* is a work with cross-genre appeal, richly detailed and intricately set.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (July/August 2018)

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