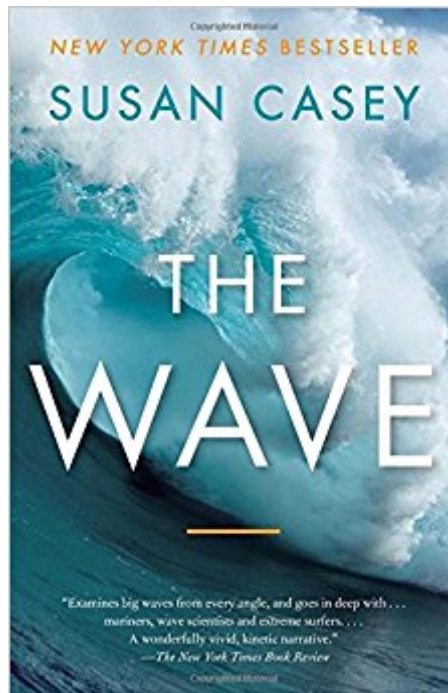




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The Wave: In Pursuit Of The Rogues, Freaks, And Giants Of The Ocean



Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book A San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of the Year In her astonishing new book Susan Casey captures colossal, ship-swallowing waves, and the surfers and scientists who seek them out. For legendary surfer Laird Hamilton, hundred foot waves represent the ultimate challenge. As Susan Casey travels the globe, hunting these monsters of the ocean with Hamilton's crew, she witnesses first-hand the life or death stakes, the glory, and the mystery of impossibly mammoth waves. Yet for the scientists who study them, these waves represent something truly scary brewing in the planet's waters. With inexorable verve, *The Wave* brilliantly portrays human beings confronting nature at its most ferocious.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Casey, O magazine editor-in-chief, travels across the world and into the past to confront the largest waves the oceans have to offer. This dangerous water includes rogue waves south of Africa, storm-born giants near Hawaii, and the biggest wave ever recorded, a 1,740 foot-high wall of wave (taller than one and a third Empire State Buildings) that blasted the Alaska coastline in 1958. Casey follows big-wave surfers in their often suicidal attempts to tackle monsters made of H₂O, and also interviews scientists exploring the danger that global warming will bring us more and larger waves. Casey writes compellingly of the threat and beauty of the ocean at its most dangerous. We get vivid historical reconstructions and her firsthand account of being on a jet-ski watching surfers risk their lives. Casey also smoothly translates the science of her subject into engaging prose. This book will

fascinate anyone who has even the slightest interest in the oceans that surround us. Copyright
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refers to the Audio CD edition.

Part science lesson and part adrenaline rush, *The Wave* is an intense thrill ride that manages to take a broad look at oversized, potentially devastating waves. The critics praised Casey's eloquent writing and jaw-droppingly vivid descriptions of chasing--or trying desperately to steer clear of--these aquatic behemoths. Although the *Los Angeles Times* craved more technical information, and the *New York Times Book Review* considered the combination of science and surfing a bit odd, most critics brushed such concerns aside. Casey's entertaining and enlightening exploration of the world's giant waves will leave readers with "a healthy respect for the power of these waves" (*Los Angeles Times*) and a chilling sense of how little we truly know about the oceans that surround us. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Susan Casey embeds her chilling climatological forecasts into a scintillating web of surfing stories, and other tales of adventure and tragedy on the high seas. I couldn't help comparing "The Wave" to Pulitzer-prize-winning author, John McPhee's fascinating nonfiction books on topics ranging from atom bombs to oranges. Both authors are deeply knowledgeable about their subject matter, and both perform amazing riffs on a wide range of topics--in Casey's case, everything to do with oceanic waves, ranging from big-wave surfing to Lloyd's of London insurance practices. Both authors also become physically involved in their subject. Casey becomes a surfing groupie, and travels all over the world with her new friends, searching for the next big wave. We meet some very interesting people along the way: mariners; extreme surfers; weather forecasters; and scientists. In the latter category is Bill McGuire (aka Disasterman), Director of the Aon Benfield UCL Hazard Research Center, volcanologist, Benfield Professor of geophysical hazards at the University of London, and author of the books *Apocalypse* and *Global Catastrophes: A Very Short Introduction* (Very Short Introductions). His section of this book (entitled "Wave Good-Bye") is where Casey works in some serious predictions about how the changing climate is going to affect (among other things) wave height: "McGuire had a lot to say about waves, unimaginably large waves." Nevertheless, the surfers almost steal the show. Here is the author's description of someone who looked like a surfer: "He had the same disheveled cool, a hint of a hell-raising look in his eyes, and a movie star smile." Better yet, here is her description of a wave called 'Mavericks' off of the California coast: "The Aleutian swells thunder three thousand miles across the North Pacific,

barging past the continental shelf until their progress is rudely halted by a thick rock ledge...When it hits this shallower depth, the wave energy rears up, shrieking and screaming, forming the clawed hand that is Mavericks."Mavericks is one of the many waves that the surfers in this book ride...or die under. As if the sheer size and ferocity of the wave wasn't daunting enough, "Mavericks was located at the southern end of a region known as the Red Triangle because more attacks by great white sharks had occurred there than anywhere else on earth."The descriptions of Big Water in this book are so harrowing, that I cancelled my cruise around world (that I was going to take if I hit it big in the lotto). This author can write! She dumps the reader into the midst of Nature's most dangerous places in a way I haven't experienced since I read "Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster" by Jon Krakauer.

I highly enjoyed this book,I thought her use of big wave surfers kept a book about waves lively.She had my attention the entire book,I never knew what would happen next.Would have been nice with more info about rogues,just because I find them interesting,but it turns out even the experts don't know a whole lot.For a while I thought she had a crush on Laird Hamilton,but gradually assumed she just admired all big wave surfers.She was very knowledgeable about their sport,the ups and downs.This book is about two subjects-big wave surfing and the science of waves.The subjects intertwine of course and I think she did it masterfully.Sure she uses flowery language a time or two,but I took that in stride.Maybe women just like more adjectives in their non-fiction than men.She also warned about climate change and the changing of storms.There was much knowledge to be gleaned in this one.

The blends wave science with big wave surfing constantly going back and forth. May sound confusing but it works well sharing big wave surf stories with science and big wave analysis. Nothings boring... the science gives you depth and appreciation while the surfing blends in excitement and thoughtfulness about the subject. The author goes pretty deep in each direction, and she was able to gain access to information that I felt privileged to get to know about. Book goes fast, and you will walk away with much more knowledge about big waves than you started the book with.

I agree with several of the previous reviewers. The Wave albeit well written is 1/3 about wave science/historical events and 2/3 "surf city" - it appeared that Susan was more enamored with Hamilton and his accomplished surfer colleagues etc. than depth in actual oceanographic wave

behavior. That said - the relative contribution of what she did elaborate on wave science and historical contexts was quite good. But there was SO MUCH diversion to beach personalities and tribulations I really skimmed over all of these chapters to the far more interesting segments. As far as i am concerned the Devil's Teeth is her most excellent signature work (not Wave!)

I am still reading "The Wave" by Susan Casey. She writes about her adventure to find out about the biggest waves on this planet and gets in touch with scientists, geologists and big-wave surfers. One of her strengths, besides her passion and drive to be as close as possible to the myth and mystery of the biggest wave the waters of this planet can produce, is her ability to form sentences and analogies that are as stark as they experience of a big wave itself. At first I thought of her way of writing as exaggerative. Now I feel that it totally needs the volume and repertoire of her words to get the reader anywhere close to the experience of a big wave. She does a marvelous job. I am in to page 238 of her describing stories of giant waves and I am more hooked than ever. So if anyone is interested in big waves, which fascinate me like not much else, I can highly recommend this book. Marvelous job. Still about 100 pages to go, which is hard to believe because I thought I just read the most exciting story ever in the previous chapter. We'll see.

Fascinating book. Susan Casey's lively writing style and understanding of the big wave surfers' lifestyle added a depth of interest to this story. Ms Casey was involved in everything she wrote about and her personal experience kept the scientific aspect of the information from being tedious. I really enjoyed this book. I came away with an appreciation for Laird Hamilton's approach to surfing the big waves in addition to my awe of the massive waves that exist in our oceans. Read it!

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