



Plenty Enough Suck to Go Around: A Memoir of Floods, Fires, Parades, and Plywood

Cheryl Wagner

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Print and public-radio journalist Wagner describes rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina. . .Despite Kafkaesque experiences with the infamous bureaucratic mess that threatened to undo New Orleans once and for all, the couple held on to their optimism for the city and their little piece of it. Wagner captures the nostalgia, the heartbreak and the friendships spawned in Katrina's turbulent aftermath with raw emotional honesty free of sentimentality. Unflinching, humorous and heartfelt. --*Kirkus Reviews*

The cliché New Orleans gets into people's blood" happens to be very true--just not always convenient. For Cheryl Wagner, along with her indie-band boyfriend, a few eccentric pals, and two aging basset hounds, abandoning the city she loved wasn't an option.

This is the story of Cheryl's disturbing surprise view from her front porch after she moved back home to find everything she treasured in shambles. . .and her determined, absurd, and darkly funny three-year journey of trying to piece it all back together.

In the same heartfelt and hilarious voice that has drawn thousands of listeners to her broadcasts on Public Radio International's *This American Life*, Wagner shares her unique yet universal story of rebuilding a life after it's been flooded, dried, and died. . .

"Dark, funny, generous and jarring--occasionally tragic but never sentimental." --Paul Tough, author of *Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America*

"A wonderful, touching, thoughtful, crazy, loving book." --Frederick Barthelme, author of *Waveland* and eleven other works of fiction including *Elroy Nights*, a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and a *New York Times* Notable Book

"A wild, blood and guts lived-to-tell-all memoir." --Porochista Khakpour, author of *Sons and Other Flammable Objects*

"The book would be heartbreaking if it weren't so funny, so clear-eyed, and so beautifully fierce." --James Whorton Jr., author of *Frankland*

"I love it." --Pete Jordan, author of *Dishwasher: One Man's Quest to Wash Dishes in Fifty States*

"Imagine if Jack Kerouac had lived through the flood and wrote you a long, personal letter from the wreckage." --Jonathan Goldstein, author of *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bible!* and Host of CBC's and PRI's radio show *WireTap*

"Wagner writes with honesty and humor." --Annie Choi, author of *Happy Birthday or Whatever*

"A work of art, unsparing of everything, including itself." --Jack Pendarvis, author of *Awesome*

The Times-Picayune

Wagner's is a distinctive and funny voice, with that tone of the committed (and at times *should be* committed) New Orleanian.

The title comes, as if you can't guess, from those infuriating stories of comparative loss post-Katrina, when those who had lost everything were subjected to the litanies of minor inconvenience by the more fortunate. "Everyone's loss is big to them," Wagner kept telling herself. And so it was. "I was not interested in sifting and weighing suck on a bunch of tiny scales," she continued. "Suck was too hard to quantify. There was plenty enough suck to go around. Sitting around measuring it wasn't going to fix anything."

What makes this story uniquely memorable is Wagner's wise and wisecracking voice, the broken heart beneath the bravado. Working on a survey of gutted/non-gutted buildings, she writes, "By the time you finished hearing people's problems, you wished you were a professional busybody or the mayor or the governor or a city inspector or anyone who could and would actually do something." And who hasn't had that feeling, way back then or as recently as yesterday?

Finally, Wagner and her boyfriend end up with "the dogs, sanity and each other." And we end up with this fine book, with its searing honesty, its gallows humor and its survivor spirit.

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