



Don't Let the Wind Catch You

Aaron Paul Lazar

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When twelve-year-old Gus LeGarde and his two best friends, Elsbeth and Siegfried, stumble on a hermit's cabin in the woods in the summer of 1965, they're unprepared for Tully, the crotchety old man who sticks his head out the window and threatens to shoot them. But more surprising is Tully's best friend, a young Indian girl spirit, Penaki, who reveals herself to the children by forming patterns with butterflies, rattling tin cups, drawing on dusty mirrors, and flipping book pages.

Tully's past is shrouded in mystery, and Gus can't understand why his mother hates Tully so. Gus is drawn into an intriguing mystery that reveals long-hidden truths about his grandfather, with even deeper ties to the Ambuscade and the history of the Genesee Valley region. Will Gus's findings rewrite the most brutal chapter in the history of Livingston County?

Don't Let the Wind Catch You Details

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From Reader Review Don't Let the Wind Catch You for online ebook

Jonel Boyko says

Lazar has a very flowing and approachable writing style. He pulls the reader right in without them ever noticing. His well-developed and laid out storyline take you on a delightful journey along. There is also lots of action in this story that keeps you moving forward, but it is all done so naturally that nothing seems amiss. Lazar also works some very detailed descriptions right into the action of the story to draw you further and further into this brilliant world.

The author has this novel well placed within its time period. People, places, things, and events are all built around some truth. This author, however, really knows how to take the history of a place or situation and give it a twist to make it his own without losing the essential parts of said history. Reality and fiction combine seamlessly in this amazing tale.

The characters that Lazar brings forth for this story are not only intriguing, but uniquely suited to the story in which they find themselves. You get to know the main characters quite well, like they you're your school mates. These characters become part of you and they take you on a wild ride right along with them.

This is definitely a fun for all ages story that keeps you guessing, keeps you captivated, and above all, makes you think. I definitely wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone.

Please note that I received this novel free of charge from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Cindy says

Children are full of questions. From the time they learn to speak, one of the most frequent words out of their mouths is "why", and in Don't Let the Wind Catch You, Aaron Paul Lazar tells the story from the point of view of a curious 12 year old Gus LeGarde, who seems to find a mystery around every corner and is determined to find answers to all of the resulting unanswered questions. In true Lazar style, he hooked me with the first sentence and reeled me right into the story as Gus and 11 year old twins, Siefried and Elspeth, crawl on their bellies towards an old shack in the woods near the Ambuscade monument in Letchworth State Park in Livingston County, New York. Suddenly, they hear a man talking but they don't hear a responding voice, and as they creep closer the old hermit shoves a shotgun out the window and threatens to shoot if they don't get off of his land. How did he know they were there and was he talking to himself or was there a second person in the shack? What was the high-pitched wail that came out of nowhere and why does his mother turn white as a sheet when Gus asks his parents who lives in the old shack?

As any avid reader knows, there are many different genres of fiction, from mystery to paranormal to historical fiction and even stories about relationships and families. Each has its own following of readers, but this story will entice any and all readers because Lazar takes a page from each of these genres and binds it into a perfectly well rounded and exciting story, which will leave you wanting more. We start off with the mystery of the identity of the recluse in the woods and why Gus' mother hates him so much, but after Gus finally meets Zachariah Tully we soon have to consider a second mystery. Who is his unusual friend

Penacki, and what does she have to do with the horrible ambush and massacre that occurred on a fateful day in September, 1779 during the American Revolutionary War. With the stubbornness and defiance of youth, when Gus is told to stay away from Tully, he just becomes more curious and determined to solve both mysteries and let nothing get in his way. As a result, Gus and his friends find themselves in one dangerous situation after another as they piece together the lives of Gus' grandfather and Tully as young men and the truth about the ambush that took place almost 200 years in the past.

This series usually follows Gus as an adult, but I really loved that Lazar chose to go back in time to Gus' childhood for a few books in order to give us insight into how Gus became such a loving and sensitive man. Gus was a child of the sixties, a decade I was also born into, so the story took me back to my childhood as well and brought back some amazing memories. When you can relate to a book and it sparks personal memories, the story becomes even more special, and Lazar certainly remembers exactly what childhood was like. I found myself smiling as he described Gus' reaction when his father tries to kiss him in front of his friends and giggling when he describes the tingle of excitement that goes through Gus' body when he starts to notice Elsbeth in a new and different way. Among other things, this is truly a beautiful coming of age story, as you witness the new emotions that wash over Gus and see his maturity grow. The era itself is described to perfection as well as the kids indulge in penny candy, listen to the Beatles on a transistor radio, and hop on their horses and disappear for a whole day exploring in the woods by themselves. Lazar does not leave out a single detail about growing up in the 60's, and I welcomed all of the wonderful memories.

Once again, Lazar shows his incredible talent as a writer through the wonderfully diverse cast of characters that he introduces us to. Each one has endearing qualities, and I couldn't help but grow to love them all as the story progressed. It was interesting watching how the characters interacted with each other and learned from each other, and as in many of his books, Lazar also throws in a lesson to the reader as he takes an issue that is prevalent in today's society and deals with it in a sensitive way through the eyes of a young boy whose innocence has not yet been tainted by the prejudices of our world today. Young Gus is unconditionally accepting, something which many people today have lost the ability to do.

Home for Lazar is the Genesee Valley countryside in upstate New York, and his deep love for the area is obvious. A pleasant surprise in this story was how a piece of important history for the region became one of the focal points of one of the mysteries Gus is trying to solve. Tully's shack is near the Groveland Ambuscade Monument, site of the Boyd and Parker ambush, which was a minor military engagement in present day Groveland, New York on September 13, 1779, during the American Revolutionary War. A scout group of the Sullivan Expedition was ambushed and captured by Loyalists and their Seneca Indian allies led by Little Beard and 17 men were killed. This was a part of history I was not familiar with, and I found it fascinating. When Gus finally uncovers the secret that could change the history books forever, I had the urge to read more about this important part of the American Revolutionary War.

Don't Let the Wind Catch You is part of the Gus LeGarde Mystery series, a sequel to Tremolo: Cry of the Loon and a prequel to Double Forté, but it can easily be read and enjoyed as a standalone novel. It is a nonstop whirlwind of excitement and suspense where the story line definitely keeps you guessing. I like that in a book because you certainly don't get bored when there are always numerous possibilities turning over in your mind, and just when you think you have it figured out, Lazar throws in another clue that tosses your theory out the window. Don't Let the Wind Catch You was thoroughly enjoyable, and I can't recommend it enough. Trust me, you won't be able to put it down!

Ann says

Three kids, an old man, and a ghost--what could possibly go wrong? *Don't Let the Wind Catch You* is an engrossing tale set in a rural area in the mid 1960s. I especially enjoyed the references to products and shows that were so prevalent back then. (My guess is, the author himself received a radio set just like the one in the novel--or else he's one heckuva good historian!) For those of us who were alive in the 1960s, this is a great trip down memory lane.

Better than that, it's a coming of age novel of a young boy who's just beginning to learn that being an adult is full of lots of issues he hadn't even imagined. And in between growing up, he's got to solve the mystery of Penni, the ghost.

The book is well written, engaging, and would be a great addition to any budding library collection for a middle-school age boy or girl.

Sheila says

Gus's best friend's twin sister "didn't scare easily now she was eleven," and Gus doesn't scare too easily either in Aaron Paul Lazar's effortlessly evocative and haunting middle-grade/teen/adult novel, *Don't Let the Wind Catch You*. Quick sure writing with a clear young-teen point of view sets the scene of time and place. Three friends ride horses in the Genesee Valley, in a 1950s world where Mexican food was a new experience, neighbors were friends, and doors weren't always locked. Mothers cook. Fathers go out to work. And the long summer stretches ahead of the children with all its promise and fun. But when Gus meets a strange old hermit in the forest, the past becomes more important than the future. Why does his sweet kind mother dislike the man so much? Who is the man's mysteriously silent friend? And what really happened in that long-ago battle commemorated in stone?

Blending wonderful real-world detail with ghostly mystery and vivid characters, the writing pulls in readers of any age and offers wisdom beautifully cloaked in storytelling drama. Children's fantasy, history's error, and adult's unthinking judgments all combine to make this a story filled with generous spirit and powerful authenticity. There's a thoroughly pleasing, thought-provoking honesty in these characters, and a truly enticing mystery to be solved, all convincingly wound around the thoughts of a young boy experiencing his first kiss, enjoying the music on his first transistor radio, and, for the most part, obeying his parents just as a young boy should.

Disclosure: I love the author's books and jumped at the chance to read and review a free ecopy of this one.

Evelyne says

What a beautiful refreshing story. This is my first book written by Aaron Paul Lazar and I truly enjoyed it. Gus, Elsbeth and Sigfried are very likeable characters, and it took me back to a time that I remember very vividly. Tully, the hermit and his secret and his mysterious ghost friend Penni and all the other characters made me nostalgic about that period of time. I am looking forward to reading more about Gus and his friends. Aaron Lazar, I thank you for writing such a lovely story about three preteens and their coming of age in a rural American countryside and bringing to light some very difficult subjects so effectively.

Paul says

I must admit, that while I was drawn in by the synopsis, I didn't expect to enjoy it as much as I did. I am a huge fan of Encyclopedia Brown and the Three Investigators and young Gus is a Hardy Boys fan, which is appropriate since this book slides right in with these great classics. Don't Let the Wind Catch You is an exciting mystery adventure that young readers will absolutely love. The author does a great job of slipping in a few lessons (what parents should be, being honest) here and there that flow seamlessly into the story. Readers won't even notice they are learning something valuable. Do yourself a favor and pick up this book today, and then investigate Mr. Lazar's other books; I know I will.

Disclaimer: I received a free book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Paul R. Hewlett

Anne says

I was quickly drawn into the world of Gus LeGarde I felt as though I was following close behind Gus and his two best friends

Elsbeth and Siegfried when they first meet Tully the cranky old hermit. You get the feeling that there will be a mystery

to solve. Clues begin to appear and you soon are turning pages faster and faster to solve the mystery. There is even a ghost Penni to

add a spooky element to the story. This is the type of book that you would have read growing up under the covers with a flashlight It took

me back to when I was growing up and hiding in my room reading Nancy Drew Books on a Saturday instead of being outside. Don't Let the Wind

Catch you it the perfect coming of Age story. Following along with Gus and his friends it will be time well spent and you will not be sorry.

I was given a copy of Don't Let the Wind Touch you to review and it was one of the best gifts I have ever received.

Lilmissmolly says

I really enjoyed listening to Don't Let the Wind Catch You by Aaron Lazar. This was my first book from the Gus LeGarde series, and I wasn't sure what to expect. I am a 40-something woman who enjoys a variety of genres, including young adult. Not knowing what genre this audiobook falls into, I'd say this is more in the vein of the old Hardy Boys serial, with a supernatural twist. It's a good story that is both a mystery and a ghost story.

The story centers around a 12-year old boy, Gus LeGarde, in the summer of 1965 in Upstate New York. Gus is an "old soul" who is wise beyond his years. Gus and his friends frequently ride through the woods on horseback. Despite orders from his parents to do otherwise, he quickly befriends a cranky old hermit who lives in the woods without electricity and without running water.

Tully has a few secrets that the story reveals through Gus's eyes of youthful and limited experiences. One such secret is that Tully speaks to an Indian ghost, Penni, who died in the 1700's. Penni shows herself to Gus and his friends too by rattling tin cups and flipping book pages. She also appears to Gus twice to save Tully's life. Eventually Penni gets Gus and Tully to help solve the mystery surrounding her death, which supposedly will help Penni cross over into the next realm.

The book is narrated by Erik Synnestvedt whom I've never heard before. He did an admirable job, using consistent voices for each character throughout. He might not read as enthusiastically as other narrators, but his consistency in tone and temperament were calming, setting the right tone for this novel. I'd listen to another one of his narrated stories anytime.

In summary, if you are tired of reading/listening to the normal contemporary stories out there, and are looking for a good, sweet natured story, I highly suggest giving *Don't Let the Wind Catch You* by Aaron Lazar.

Felisha Caldeira says

This Aaron Paul Lazar's mystery is well written and is easy to pick and up and put down. Even though this story is part of a several part series, I had no trouble jumping in at this point and I didn't feel like I was missing anything as a listener/reader, which is very rare and commendable. It had a down to earth plot and fun twists and turns that can bring you back to your childhood adventure days.

Narrator, Erik Synnestvedt, does well to capture the youthful nature of this book. His voices are simple yet diverse and keep you engaged throughout the tale.

Overall a good read. I would recommend this to all.

This audiobook was given to me in exchange for an honest review.

You are the author of this review

0 of 0 people found this review helpful

Deborah Ledford says

Gus LeGarde's adventure along with twins, Elsbeth and Siegfried, is a wild ride. One of intrigue, enchantment and compassion. Pestered by a persistent Indian girl's spirit, Gus and the twins set off on a quest to discover the truth to a long-buried secret. During his investigation, Gus uncovers another secret too clandestine to share...with anyone. Lazar is a consummate storyteller whose compelling characters transcend age and beliefs as he takes the reader on a compelling journey of self-discovery.

Magdalena says

With every book in the LeGarde series, the reader gets to know Gus better, and the more we know of him, the more likeable he becomes. Rarely has an author given us such insight into a single character through a book series. We've met Gus as an adult in *Upstaged*, a grieving widower in *Double Forte*, as a young boy in *Tremolo: Cry of the Loon* and now, in *Don't Let the Wind Catch You*, as a 12 year old just at the point of becoming a teenager. It's 1965 and Gus is starting to feel a growing attraction to his friend Elsbeth, who we know will later become his wife. Elsbeth and her brother Siegfried are his best friends and together they have lots of adventures. This summer they come across an old cabin in the woods and are surprised to find Tully, a cranky old man, talking to a ghost. Tully chases them off with a gun, but the trio of young detectives—especially the intrepid Elsbeth—is so intrigued that they go back again, forming an unlikely alliance with Tully as they attempt to uncover a long buried secret and free the spirit of Penaki.

As with all of Lazar's novels, the books stand alone, with Lazar providing enough back material to enable readers to catch on quickly, but fans of the entire series will really enjoy the layering effect that comes from knowing Gus, Elsbeth and Siegfried at different stages of their lives, and of seeing hints and pivotal moments that led to events and character traits that appear in later books. There are plenty of links between the books too. As always, the writing is beautiful and delicate, rich with musical influence – in this case, the music of the 1960s, with the lovely local setting of the Genesee Valley. There are touches of history too as we learn about the Groveland Ambuscade, and delicious food that Gus' mother cooks and Gus eats with relish:

Here you go. Now see, I've chopped up these things to add to them like toppings." She pointed to the bowls lined up like little soldiers in a row. "Shredded cheese, black olives, pickles, tomatoes, lettuce. And this sauce here is to drizzle over the top."

Gus himself is a great observer, and he pays great attention to the details of his surroundings, which really adds depth and interest to the book as we explore with his point of view:

A well pump protruded from a metal stand beside a wooden pie cabinet where the hermit kept his dishes. Another rough-hewn table stood near the tiny counter with salt and pepper shakers, a roll of paper towels, and a clean coffee mug on top. The rest of the cooking implements hung on a wall to the left of the front door. Two cast iron skillets, a big ladle, a soup pot, an assortment of small pots, and a red enamel coffee pot hung on hooks and nails. There was no refrigerator, and as we noticed yesterday, no electricity.

The warmth between the characters, the families, and the characters they meet is obvious in this tight-knit community, with the mystery unfolding gently. The book doesn't shy from real issues, including homophobia, historical lies, murder, betrayal, and massacre, everything unfolds so gently, and with such good humour, that reading the book is an absolute joy. Despite the serious issues that the book addresses, this is as suitable for a young adult reader as for an adult, and will appeal to wide audience. It's clear that Lazar has come to know and love his characters and every time he revisits them, he brings out new nuances and depths, so that returning to a Gus Lazar mystery is like meeting an old friend once again.

Allison Kohn says

Part fantasy, part history, part romance, this book is a pleasurable read, not only for it's smoothness, but for it's imagery - both of character and local. Don't mis this wonderful adventure into the mind of a gifted writer.

Cheryl Malandrinos says

Having read the first mystery in the young Gus LeGarde Mystery series, I quickly signed up to review the next book. There are similarities in content and style between Tremolo: cry of the loon and Don't Let the Wind Catch You: both find Gus and his friends involved in a mystery that surrounds people from their community, the setting is so much a part of the story that it becomes a character, and both have supplementary characters with interesting stories (the mysterious visitor in Cabin Fifteen from Tremolo and the woman who arrives during a rainstorm that has an intriguing past in Don't Let the Wind Catch You.)

From the moment I started this book, I couldn't put it down. The twists and turns, along with uncovered secrets propelled me forward. As a history lover, I truly enjoyed the mystery that revolves around Penni and the impact Gus's discovery had by shedding light on historical events in his hometown. The paranormal element to this story will be attractive to this market. For me, this is the perfect type of mystery because it connects past and present, showing how the past always influences the future. While I was a bit surprised Gus was so accepting of Tully's secret, considering the age in which the book took place, I feel it's a great message that is subtly woven into the story.

I hope Lazar continues writing stories of Gus LeGarde's youth. They are fascinating!

Lisette says

For Gus LeGarde and his two friends, Elsbeth and Siegfried, life can't get anything better than it is now. They come and go as they please, and can do just about anything they put their minds to. Granted, they've been known to get in trouble on occasion, thus paying the price later on for their indiscretions, but they can't deny their love for adventure when the occasions call for it.

Stumbling upon what they believe to be an abandoned cabin one day, they children soon realize they've made a mistake. Someone definitely lives there, someone who seems to be more aware of his surroundings than they are. The shocking discovery soon piques their interest further. Why is a man living all alone in the wild? they wonder. Why stay away from civilization?

Delving into the secrets surrounding the hermit living in the cabin, the children stumble upon a secret as old as time. Determined to uncover the past, they're soon presented with another dilemma. The spirit of a young Indian girl hovers in the vicinity. They've never come across such a phenomenon before, and at first, are afraid to believe in the supernatural. The more they uncover, the more questions they have about the situation at hand. If they're to set all wrongs to right, they'll need to place their trust in the spirit's hands. A spirit that might just be the only link that will allow them to uncover the answers to the questions running through their minds.

A bittersweet coming-of-age story, *Don't Let The Wind Catch You* is one of those stories that will definitely capture your attention as you dive into the lives of three precocious children who are determined to make the most of the world around them. They've stumbled upon an unexpected secret, one they hope to bring to the light once everything is said and done. Sadly, they don't take into account that life sometimes gets in the way of what we think we must do, then and there. Never-the-less, they give things their all as they try to bring peace to this who need it. I honestly enjoyed this story, and look forward to reading more of Aaron's work soon enough.

?Susan? says

A small town with a big mystery and a playful ghost. This is the sixth book in "Gus LeGarde", series but it can stand alone. A coming of age tale in 1965 that was well written and the characters were relatable. Gus must find something the ghost is desperate to have discovered, that will lead to her past.

It was fun to step back into a time where transistor radios were new and neighborhoods were safe. Erik Synnestvedt, did a wonderful job with the narration, good voices helped to separate the characters and brought them to life.
