



## Full Fathom Five

### A Daughter's Search

MARY LEE COE FOWLER

One woman's quest for knowledge of her father lost at sea

Mary Lee Coe Fowler was a posthumous child, born after her father, a submarine skipper in the Pacific, was lost at sea in 1943. Her mother quickly remarried into a difficult and troubled relationship, and Mary Lee's biological father was never mentioned. It was not until her mother died and Mary Lee was a middle-aged adult that she set out to learn not only who her father was, but what happened to him and his crew, and why—and also to confront why she had shied away from asking these questions until it was nearly too late.

Fowler searched through old ships' logs, letters, and naval communiqués; visited submarine museums, the Naval Academy, and other pertinent sites; interviewed old friends and crew members who knew her dad and mom or served concurrently; and slowly reconstructed the world in which they lived. Beautifully written, Fowler's memoir reveals what she eventually learned: of the perils and hardships of submarine service in wartime, of the tragic irony of how her father's sub was probably lost, and of the long-term damage experienced by the families of those who do not come home from war.

"In her very personal quest to find a father she never knew, Ms. Fowler breathes life into those men who volunteered and served aboard the diesel boats. She wisely allows the people who were there to tell their experiences. . . . This is a romance, an intensely personal search for family roots, a war story, and a compelling examination of aspects of World War II."

—Don Keith, coauthor of *Gallant Lady: A Biography of the USS Archerfish*

**Mary Lee Coe Fowler** is a writer and teacher of English and ESL living in Maine. Author of *Growing with Community Gardening*, her work has appeared in *Other Voices*, *Mother Earth News*, and *Bloomsbury Review*.

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