



Ghosts of the Titanic

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"What really happened on that unforgettable April night in 1912?" Even after nearly a century, many facts about the sinking of the "unsinkable" ship, "Titanic," remain a mystery, as potent and perplexing as ever. But now, Dr. Charles Pellegrino -- whose "New York Times" bestseller, "Her Name, Titanic," is considered one of the preeminent books on the unparalleled catastrophe -- returns to an icy, mile-wide graveyard two and a half miles beneath the surface of the ocean to set free the ghosts that linger among the twisted wreckage. Using surviving first-hand accounts, remarkable new evidence, cutting edge technology and latest oceanic findings, he gives us the most vivid, poignant, shocking, and compelling re-creation yet of the doomed liner's horrific final moments -- and offers stunning, never-before-revealed truths about the great, tragic leviathan's history, fate, and breathtaking legacy.

Ghosts of the Titanic Details

Date : Published July 1st 2001 by Avon Books (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780380724727

Author : Charles Pellegrino , James Francis Cameron

Format : Paperback 339 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Historical, Science

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Andy says

I've read several books about the Titanic and this was without a doubt the best one yet. I couldn't put it down. The stories from the survivors about what went on during the final hours of this ship's life (as well as the lives of about 1500 people) were so interesting. Also this was the first book I've read that not only told the stories of heroism, but also the dark side of what went on. Including looting, fighting, acts of cowardice and even murder. Also gets into a bit more detail, including evidence, about the fate of most of the steerage passengers. A MUST for people who enjoy books about Titanic. I seriously can't express enough how much I enjoyed this.

Mel says

I first delved into the history of the fatal maiden voyage of the RMS Titanic after seeing James Cameron's film in 1997 at the ripe old age of 11. I could run off facts about the ship's layout, about the people travelling on it, the events leading up to the disaster, the tragic sinking itself, and the aftermath. But this book truly made me realize how very simplistic I was making the whole tragedy in my mind up to this point, not just the details of the sinking, but the politics behind and the intricacies of the decisions made by various individuals.

While I found Pellegrino's writing style to be a bit self-referential at times, and the scientific explanations behind certain events to be in some instances too esoteric to follow with much confidence, I thought he extolled wonderfully the merit of both archeological research and oral histories when it comes to interpreting the past, and explored some fascinating theories. His book contains some wonderful interactions with both Titanic survivors and professionals who've researched the ship. He also makes some bold parallels between the Titanic disaster and other more modern disasters (including one that is currently taking place) pointing out how both hubris and an individual's unwillingness to take the hard, but just, road in difficult situations can ultimately lead to immense but preventable tragedy.

Overall, highly recommended!

CJ says

Ghosts of the Titanic by Charles Pellegrino is another entry into my seemingly death-and-disaster laden Cannonball Read list. I wasn't really familiar with the sinking of the Titanic (no, despite being a teenage girl when it came out, I have never seen James Cameron's Titanic). However, I do remember as a kid reading with great interest an article about the wreckage's discovery in National Geographic. (Once again: morbid, morbid child.) When I saw this book among Half.com's "recommendations" for me, I just had to have it.

This book is a combination of first-hand archaeological experience (Pellegrino has participated in numerous ventures to Titanic with a variety of groups including James Cameron--the filmmaker managed to turn his prop investigatory robot into one of the most effective wreck investigators to date) and real witness accounts (from both conversations Pellegrino held with the few remaining survivors and from source documents

written at the time by those involved.). The author documents some of the situations that lead to the sinking, the sequence of events that occurred the night the ship went down, some of the aftermath, and also some of the discoveries that have been made since scientists first began unearthing the debris of the ship.

One of the most interesting things to me are the number of details involved. There are complex diagrams showing the ship's layout and what transpired in relation to the ship itself. Contrary to popular belief, the Titanic did not t-bone itself on an ice berg, dragging a giant gouge in the side. More likely, there were probably a number of small holes--probably totalling not more than 12 meters of open area (roughly the combined size of 2 sidewalk squares)--letting in water. Also, the sinking of the ship was not inevitable--instead a series of unfortunate circumstances and mistakes lead to the disastrous conclusion.

Another thing the book touches on are discoveries that have been made in the modern area with the assistance of the Titanic. Much has been learned about the kind of bacteria and organisms that thrive at the depths of the ocean, including a new organism (dubbed "rusticles" by the explorers) which may one day lead to advances in medical science and antibiotics. There is much left under the water which scientists and archaeologists have not even begun to investigate. According to the book (which may not be current) much exploring has been delayed or prohibited due to the number of people whose remains were likely trapped in the wreckage. However, it's likely that sometime beyond 2012 (the hundred year mark) more explorations will be undertaken, and it's mind-boggling what might be discovered.

The most fascinating thing (as I find with most history of disaster) is the human factor: how did the people who were there react? When disaster struck, did people rise to the challenge or sink to the lowest depths of their natures? It seems with the Titanic (as in nearly every other situation) there were an equal number on either side, as well as many in the middle who perished without documentation one way or another. It is enough to prove a point for the most pessimistic pessimist or the most optimistic optimist. For every gentleman who sacrificed his space in a life boat in order to leave room for women and children, there is a story of how steerage passengers were locked in below decks in order to "avoid confusion" while the first and second class passengers were led to the life boats (the first class dogs were actually set free of their kennels for a chance at escape before the third class passengers). On the other hand, for every story of cowardice--such as the owner of the White Star Line making sure he got himself in a lifeboat even if it meant leaving women and children behind--there is a story of bravery--the engineers who stayed below decks, sacrificing their lives in order to keep the lights on just a little longer to help with the evacuation. It's all so crazy--the best and worst of humanity shows up in situations like this, and THAT I think is why I love disaster books.

This is a great book, although some of the descriptions of the physical destruction can be a little tough to follow if you're not versed in physics and such. However, the diagrams are a great help, and there is enough going on that you can skim those highly scientific bits a little and not miss too much. I recommend it.

Mr. Titanic says

A rare and captivating account about more than just Titanic history. Pellegrino delves into compelling scientific and archaeological aspects of the Titanic's remains and how present day research of the ship ties back into the emotion and magnitude of her immortal story as a powerful disaster. The science is solid, Pellegrino's theories, especially "down blast" have been gaining momentum as very plausible scenarios to explain the forensics of the ship's condition, and perhaps even more interesting are his first-hand accounts of oceanographic expeditions to the wreck site - excerpts that speak to the heart of any explorer or lover of

science and adventures of curiosity. Dr. Pellegrino truly understands people, his passionate writing and insight into the events are touching and phenomenal. At one point he is the cold, unswayed scientist examining the facts, and at another he has bridged the Titanic's story from a century ago to modern readers in a brilliant and heart wrenching way. "Farewell, Titanic" is an excellent followup to this classic.

Vicki says

Pretty technical but the stories about the people on board were fascinating. I enjoyed the book for the most part.

Jill Hutchinson says

There have been many books written about the Titanic....those before she was found by Dr. Bob Ballard and those after the discovery. Those written after she was located have mooted some of the theories about her sinking that were held by earlier experts. This book is written by a scientist who accompanied Ballard and several other visitors to the site, including James Cameron (the director of the eponymous film) and who was acquainted with Walter Lord, whose book *A Night To Remember* is still selling. His approach to the telling of the tale of that fateful maiden voyage is unique and holds the reader's interest (except for a few parts that are fairly technical). He shows us the last horrifying moments on board the ship through the eyes of survivors, and reveals fascinating details and discoveries on the Titanic as she lies on the ocean floor. He shows great respect for the lost souls and refused to touch any of the artifacts taken from the debris field that might have belonged to the passengers (shoes, clothing, toys, etc). Parts of that debris field have since been declared off-limits due to his efforts as it is considered a graveyard; thus the ghosts of the Titanic. The world continues to be fascinated by the Titanic and her doomed voyage although it has been over 100 years since she sank. I would recommend this book, even if you have read others as it contains information not previously known. A good but haunting read.

Stuart says

An absorbing, eye-opening, sad and ultimately tragic book describing the events, hopeless attempts at rescuing the ship and extremely bad decisions that led to the sinking of the 'unsinkable' liner. Pellegrino uses eye-witness accounts, letters, transcripts of the inquiries in the UK and US, and knowledge derived from diving expeditions to the ship to compile as accurate a record of the timeline of April 14th, 1912. An amazing read.

Alison says

I have been a fan of Titanic knowledge for a long time now. I don't know why, it's just one of those things that interests me. This book was a great one. I learned way more than I previously knew. I think this is a great read for anyone who would like to know better what went down that tragic moment in history. Phytoplankton and rusticles, class divisions and their results, pride, fate, compassion, bravery, cowardice and much more. I learned more about Titanic and the people aboard than I had learned prior to reading it. It's just

a great read and really gives a glimpse into a piece of important history and a look at things to be learned and not repeated. Fantastic book! 5 stars for the amount of information and insights present in this book.

Jessika says

This was a fantastic look into the history of the Titanic. If you find yourself like I do--fascinated by the Titanic--this is a book you won't want to miss.

I will admit: some of the science, the in-depth coverage of what happened when, and the detailed layout of the wreckage was over my head. What was ultimately compelling for me wasn't the nitty gritty details but rather the eye-witness accounts of the events of that fateful night. There were many times that I paused while reading just to fully contemplate. I learned a lot, too, which is always a plus. I thought I had a pretty good understanding of what happened that night before I delved into this book, but I walked away with a much greater understanding of events. It seems, at least to me, that the Titanic was fated to sink, when one takes in everything that happened. There were countless "if only this one little thing had changed" situations that could have spared this tragedy. It's fascinating to think that every last little thing came together to "make sure" that this tragedy happened.

Overall, this was a quality addition to the literature on the Titanic and one you won't want to miss.

Stefanie says

"Be will to take the hard road. That's the lesson I want the children to bring home from the Titanic. Not that God can kill you with an iceberg if you cross the ocean. What they should be learning is that we must never follow people into anything we believe may lead to evil." -George Tulloch

Pellegrino is my favorite non-fiction author for his ability to talk about history and science and archaeology in a way that makes it real. This book shares the stories of that fateful night the Titanic sank, presents diagrams, puts forth theories, and takes you down to the depths in a submersible to see the wreckage and what can be learned from it. It's fascinating and tragic in the way that only non-fiction can be when it is written at a time when you can just as easily explore a site as you can talk to survivors.

Gene says

A worthy successor to Lord's Night to Remember and The Night Lives On.

This is the Titanic as Wild West story-lots of people under assumed names and packing heat.

Lots of survival stories, like the only survivor of the electrical department. Science spotlighting what happened during the event & afterward.

The death of Thomas Andrews. The stolid immovability of Captain Lord of the Californian.

And some moving moments from some of the youngest survivors.

A favorite which moved me a lot: This is from one of the final chapters-Their fates. Pellegrino talks a lot about the Navatril family, and has this about the oldest son:

Michel Navatril, though only four years old in 1912, retained vivid recollections of the entire voyage, right down to such details as the fried eggs he had eaten one morning as the ocean passed by the dining saloon window. When he and his brother were reunited with their Mother the New York Evening Journal protested that the boys should have been adopted by a wealthy American family, rather than returned to a hopeless future with their poor Italian Mother. Michel's younger brother became an architect but received lingering and ultimately fatal wounds when he joined the French Resistance against Nazi occupation during World War II. Michel obtained his Ph.D. in 1952 and taught Philosophy at the University of Montpellier.

I remember him telling us in 1996 that his Father would soon return to sing him to sleep one last time at the hour of his death-sing for him the old folk song Michel remembered from his earliest childhood: "If I could make a perfect day for you, I'd give you a morning golden and new. . ." Michel sang the song for us in French and a couple of years later, a friend dragged me to what I had resigned myself to as a 'silly' movie about an old man who sings to a little pig named Babe. When I heard the tune, without having any idea at the moment why, I burst into tears. And still, I find it difficult to watch the scene in which Mr Hogger sings Babe back to health and to keep my eyes dry.

Good writing-and lots of surprises. A book worth reading & rereading.

Amber says

This book was just amazing. I liked it much better than his first book on Titanic (Her Name Titanic). This really got into a kind of forensic analysis of the site and very detailed survivor experiences.

Doris says

This Scholastic Canada Ltd book intrigued me well before I read the synopsis which sold it to me. 2012 being the 100th Anniversary of the sinking of the unsinkable Titanic was another intriguing fact as was the title itself - making me wonder exactly what the storyline was all about. Well, only one way to find out. So, I bought the book, read it and loved it!

This is, essentially, a teenage read - about a boy growing up, feeling awkward and left out - but I personally do love this type of book, usually an easy and straight-forward read with a good message included that applies to 'teenagers of all ages'. And 'Ghosts of the Titanic' most definitely has an interesting storyline with a message that everyone can learn from.

The set-up is the usual dysfunctional family of four, with daddy seemingly preferring his sixteen-year-old daughter over his younger son, of whom he appears frustratingly disappointed and actually calling him a loser. This isolates the boy, who's acting out even more - not really on purpose but everybody seems to take it that way. In comes a very unexpected inheritance of a haunted house which does catch the boy's interest, especially once the haunting begins ...

Author Julie Lawson presents an interesting subject and 'wields' her pen magnificently, spinning a fascinating tale which captures the reader from beginning to end. The subject matter, plot and characters, together with the paranormal influence, make for an intriguing read, with the reader wondering what will happen next and how on earth everything fits together.

A truly beautiful story - magnificently written - an absolutely wonderful read!

LibraryCin says

Charles Pellegrino is an archaeologist (amongst other things) and has travelled to the bottom of the ocean to investigate the Titanic. Not only does this book talk about his expeditions, but he also tells the stories of what happened on the Titanic.

I really enjoyed this. Some of the science was a bit detailed for me, but overall, it wasn't too bad. I did find some of the information on “rusticles” (what most people see as mineral deposits forming on the ship, Pellegrino and his fellow scientists call rusticles (like icicles), and they are not mineral deposits, but they are “alive”!), quite interesting.

Of course the best parts of the book for me, though, were the stories of the people on the Titanic and the play-by-play of what happened that night. One thing I've probably read about before, but I'm not sure if I got as much info from what else I've read, and found incredibly interesting (and horrifying) was the reaction of the crew on the nearby Californian, as they watched what was happening, but did nothing to help.

There were also some nice illustrations throughout the book. Initially, they were of artifacts found, but later there were some of the ship and minute-by-minute as it was filling up with water and where that water was, and more.

Jason says

Didn't expect a nonfiction tale, but it was excellent. Right length and very interesting. From survivors tales, the impact with the bottom. This book is a must read for any Titanic fan.
