



Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania

Erik Larson

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#1 New York Times Bestseller

From the bestselling author and master of narrative nonfiction comes the enthralling story of the sinking of the *Lusitania*

On May 1, 1915, with WWI entering its tenth month, a luxury ocean liner as richly appointed as an English country house sailed out of New York, bound for Liverpool, carrying a record number of children and infants. The passengers were surprisingly at ease, even though Germany had declared the seas around Britain to be a war zone. For months, German U-boats had brought terror to the North Atlantic. But the *Lusitania* was one of the era's great transatlantic "Greyhounds"—the fastest liner then in service—and her captain, William Thomas Turner, placed tremendous faith in the gentlemanly strictures of warfare that for a century had kept civilian ships safe from attack.

Germany, however, was determined to change the rules of the game, and Walther Schwieger, the captain of *Unterseeboot-20*, was happy to oblige. Meanwhile, an ultra-secret British intelligence unit tracked Schwieger's U-boat, but told no one. As U-20 and the *Lusitania* made their way toward Liverpool, an array of forces both grand and achingly small—hubris, a chance fog, a closely guarded secret, and more—all converged to produce one of the great disasters of history.

It is a story that many of us think we know but don't, and Erik Larson tells it thrillingly, switching between hunter and hunted while painting a larger portrait of America at the height of the Progressive Era. Full of glamour and suspense, *Dead Wake* brings to life a cast of evocative characters, from famed Boston bookseller Charles Lauriat to pioneering female architect Theodate Pope to President Woodrow Wilson, a man lost to grief, dreading the widening war but also captivated by the prospect of new love.

Gripping and important, *Dead Wake* captures the sheer drama and emotional power of a disaster whose intimate details and true meaning have long been obscured by history.



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