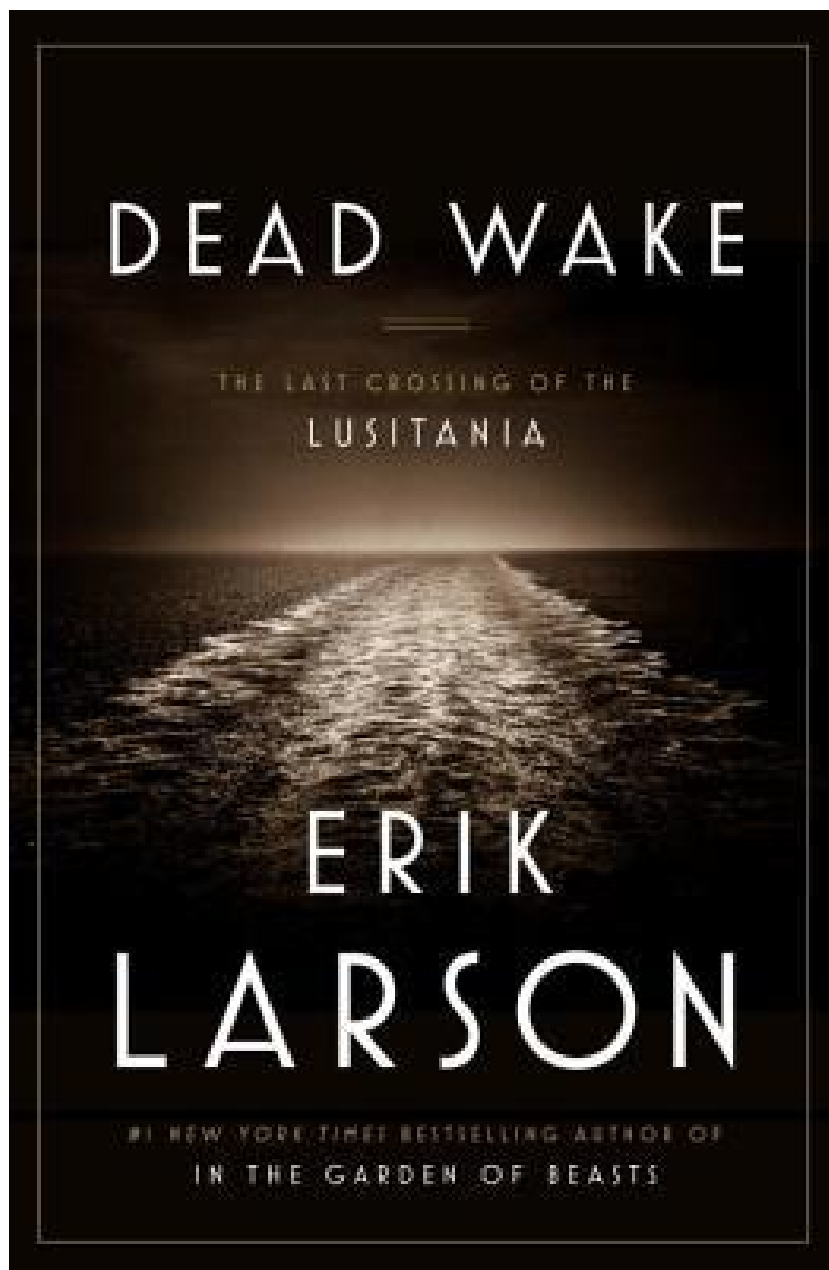


# Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Erik Larson**

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## What people Say:

### Jill

When a new Erik Larson arrives, I drop everything and read it. In my book, he's one of the few authors who can make history positively come alive. And his opening note held forth a big promise: "I give you now the saga of the Lusitania and the myriad forces, large and achingly small, that converged one lovely day in May 1915 to produce a tragedy of monumental scale, whose true character and import have long been obscured in the mists of history."

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My first thought was: "WHAT true character and import? Everyone knows about the Lusitania " sunk by a U-2 torpedo and finally propelling America head-first into WW I. Well, after finishing, I stand corrected. The story of the Lusitania still offers up many secrets.

Unlike Mr. Larson's former books, this one is slow opening. The focus is not an individual (as it is in Isaac's Storm, the Devil in the White City, Thunderstruck and In The Garden of Beasts, with history as a backdrop), but squarely on the story of the Lusitania. So the first 80 pages or so set the stage: the winds of war in Europe, the background of the Lusitania and its captain, William Thomas Turner.

But when the Lusitania begins its voyage? Wow! Nearly 2,000 passengers were aboard and also, 170 tons of Remington rifle ammunition, making it a clear and attractive target to the Germans. The passengers were not unaware that U-2 boats were bringing terror to the North Atlantic seas. We meet several of them throughout these pages: the ones who will live, the ones who will die. And we also catch many glimpses of the U.S. president, Woodrow Wilson, a widower who is distracted by a new (and ultimately, enduring) love affair that diverts his attention from the world stage.

The book is filled with questions worth asking: why did the Admiralty not provide an escort to the Lusitania, given that the ship carried a vital cargo of ammunition and artillery shells? Why did British intelligence obsessively protect the HMS Orion and provide no protection to the Lusitania? Why did they not divert the Lusitania to the newer and safer North Channel route? And most of all, "why was the ship left on its own, with a proven killer of men and ships dead ahead in its path?" Did the British deliberately set up the Lusitania to force America's hand to enter the war?

Hanging over the story of the Lusitania is its rendezvous with destiny. Had U-2 captain Schwieger not overestimated the ship's speed, if the Lusitania had departed precisely on time, if Capt. Turner had not made a final turn to starboard, had the torpedo failed (60 percent of torpedoes DID fail), there would not be a Lusitania story. And one last question remains: did the Lusitania, in fact, cause the U.S. to enter the war or was there more to the story? Read Dead Wake and find out!

## Jeffrey Keeten

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The term unsinkable had been obliterated from references regarding great ocean liners after the Titanic sunk in 1912. The impossible had already happened. In 1915 the Lusitania had made 202 voyages across the Atlantic. She was a floating beauty, spacious, luxurious, and fast. She was capable of 25 knots and could quickly leave behind any German U-boats who may have had thoughts of trying to sink her.

Captain William Thomas Turner was not too worried about the Germans, despite the increase in the number of ships being sunk. He couldn't fathom that they would be so bold or so cruel as to sink a ship filled with women and children. There had to be some niggling doubt though when the Germans sent a telegram warning people to reconsider taking trips across the Atlantic.

I was somewhat baffled at the number of people still choosing to travel through an aggressive war zone. We've all heard the adage all is fair in love and war, but in the past there had always been a few rules in war regarding innocent people. Walther Schwieger, the captain of the Unterseeboot-20, didn't adhere to any rules except the rule of engagement. His country was at war with the British, and a ship owned by the British, whether it was transporting supplies for the war effort or transporting noncombatants, was of equal interest to him. He, after all, was competing with his fellow U-Boat captains to see who could sink the most tonnage. Well, the Lusitania, at 31,550 tons, would put him over the top.

Some people had booked passage, but had decided at the last moment not to go.

I have a feeling she had an insistent tingle in the back of her neck.

Erik Larson does a wonderful job introducing us to the passengers. My favorite was Charles Lauriat,

an antiquarian bookseller, who talked a client into letting him borrow Charles Dickens's very own copy of A Christmas Carol with notes from the great writer about a lawsuit he was fighting in the margins. He wanted to take it to London to allow another researcher to copy down Dickens's notes. This might be the ultimate example, exhibit A, in

letting a friend borrow a book. There was also Theodore Pope, the famous pioneering architect, who managed to break into a profession completely dominated by men.

Because they survived, Larson is able to share with us some very personal observations of what happened before, during, and after the torpedo struck the ship. Part of the problem is there was 1,959 passengers and crew on board, and the ship sank in 18 minutes. How much time is lost while you decide if the ship is actually going to sink? It was dumb luck that Schwieger happened to place the torpedo in the exact spot to insure that the ship would go down. Pandemonium ensued.

1,195 perished.

## Will Byrnes

On May 7, 1914, only a few years after that most famous of ocean-liners had had an unfortunate encounter with an iceberg on its maiden voyage, RMS Lusitania, popularly referred to as "Lucy," having already crossed the Atlantic dozens of times, this time

On May 7, 1914, only a few years after that most famous of ocean-liners had had an unfortunate encounter with an iceberg on its maiden voyage, RMS Lusitania, popularly referred to as "Lucy," having already crossed the Atlantic dozens of times, this time carrying 1,962 souls, was sunk by a German U-boat off the Irish coast. Almost 1200 people perished. Erik Larson casts his perceptive eyes on the event, looking for explanations. Why was the ship sunk? Had it been possible for the ship to have avoided its fate? What were the global circumstances at the time and how did those effect the disaster? Who and what was on the ship? Why? What was the big deal about the Lusitania? Other ships had been sunk by U-boats during this conflict. How did the sinking of the Lusitania affect American entry into

?

- From PBS

We all have preconceptions, notions that hardly seem worth examining. I expect for most of us, the details of the sinking of the Lusitania are clouded by the fog of time. We might believe that, as with the sinking of the USS Maine in Cuba, the national response was immediate and violent. Turns out the reality was far different.

- from Cinewiki.wikispaces.com

Larson looks at events in several threads. Mostly he follows the events on the Lusitania and on the German sub (U-20 - U-boat is an abbreviation of

, or undersea boat) that would bring it down. In parallel, he looks at the politics involved in, not so much the causes of World War I, but in the stages between the commencement of hostilities and the eventual drawing of the USA into the war. He looks at the milieu in which American president Woodrow Wilson existed, politically and personally. He looks at the people involved in making tactical decisions, and at a special, secret intelligence gathering location in the UK. He stops, also, for a look at the sad accumulation of the victims in Ireland.

## Diane S â~”

Larson writes wonderful narrative non fiction, and in this book he has surpassed his own self. The amount of research that went into this book is staggering. It doesn't just cover the bombing of the Lusitania, it covers everything going on at the time and more.

What it is like inside a submarine, the roles of the crew members, how it feels and even how it smells. president Wilson's grief at the death of his wife and his courting of his second wife. The career of the Captain of the Lusitania and

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What it is like inside a submarine, the roles of the crew members, how it feels and even how it smells. president Wilson's grief at the death of his wife and his courting of his second wife. The career of the Captain of the Lusitania and the quirks in his personality. What the ship looked like, inside and out, the decorations, the food, the labor involved. The passengers, the famous and those not. The politics of the day, what secrets were known when and how. It is extraordinarily detailed but I was never bored, found it all fascinating. So much history set down for me to enjoy.

There is only one Larson book I was not crazy about, that one remains half finished, but this is an

author whose books I buy to reread and savor. By the end of the book, I had a clear and concise picture of so many things I had never knew before. Also had gotten to know some of the people on the ship and was devastated that some of them were the ones who died. A horrible tragedy brought to life, to be remembered and learned from, if only. Amazing.

## **Matt**

When I came across a radio interview with Erik Larson, talking about his new book,

, I knew I had to have it. I was excited. Like, I'm going to buy this on my phone as soon as I park my car excited.

As many of you know, I'm deep into a World War I reading project. I've collected so many new titles that my kids are never going to college. The

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sinking was a moral turning point in the war. It turned American opinion inexorably against Germany. It also sowed no small amount of disarray in German submarine policy. It is not quite the



Pearl Harbor it is made out to be, but it is immensely important. Thus, the