

The Passenger

F.R. Tallis

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A U-boat commander undertakes a daring mission in this wartime novel full of tense action and romantic respite.

Set in the early 1940s, just as the United States is entering World War II, this gripping story that traces the decisions of the commander of a German U-boat is filled with action, adventure, and emotional turmoil.

Passenger, the latest novel by F. R. Tallis, follows Siegfried Lorenz, commander of a German U-boat patrolling the North Atlantic. Lorenz is fair, capable, and well liked by his crewmen. He is assigned to collect two prisoners and bring them to Brest. But the mission does not go as planned.

Dialogue is fast paced, and the action is vivid and realistic. Most events take place on the submarine, where Lorenz is shown to be an effective leader. But more is learned about the man and his emotional strife through dream sequences that include a woman in his life. The dreams provide a glimpse into his life before the war and the weight of being commander. These revelations make him relatable and provide a contrast to the war-focused action scenes.

Other subtle actions further reveal his character and hint at additional internal conflict, such as when he is uncomfortable being recognized by civilians for his efforts in the war. A few emotional moments between him and his crew are endearing too, including an exchange between Lorenz and a crewman whose wife gives birth while he is on the mission.

Mysterious events on the submarine, from accidents to failed equipment to unusual, improbable sightings, are all rationalized by the crew, and by Lorenz. Through these plot elements, themes related to supernatural elements, and even the concept of luck, are explored.

Shore scenes are a welcome respite from the tensions of war. Action and adventure are effectively coupled with carefully detailed emotional connections between characters, heightening the tension of the whole work, particularly following escalations that put the crew in danger.

A range of paces and a mix of themes, from the action of war to romance between battles, make this a story that is full of adventure and more.

MARIA SIANO (Spring 2016)

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