ForeWord Reviews

JUVENILE NONFICTION

Titanic: Disaster at Sea
Philip Wilkinson
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The tragedy of the Titanic has become a timeless tale about the feats and failures of modern engineering and the human spirit. This stunning, large-format book brings kids a comprehensive and fascinating look at the story just in time for the event's one hundredth anniversary.

This book sets out with an ambitious goal: to cover the construction of the Titanic; the lifestyle of the time; the voyage, tragedy, and aftermath; plus survivor stories and modern-day explorations. Wilkinson succeeds in this goal using thorough research and varied and engaging page layouts, including cut-away diagrams, illustrated scenes, and newspaper-style pages. The book features gorgeous artwork mixed elegantly with photographs of the ship and artifacts recovered from the wreck. Even the endpapers have artwork.

A history of ocean liners, the construction of the Titanic, and the inner workings of the boat from the boiler to the bridge forms a kind of introduction. (This part is perfect for kids who like to know how things work.) Then the book discusses life on Titanic, from the luxury of the first- class rooms and facilities to the crowded life of steerage.

Before looking at the catastrophe itself, Wilkinson debunks myths about the voyage and presents a number of eerie predictions and premonitions of the ship's demise. The tragedy is detailed in a moment-by-moment timeline: beginning with the report of ice and ending when the rescue ship, *Carpathia*, docks in New York City.

Wilkinson also highlights key figures in the story like Bruce Ismay, head of the White Star Line, Captain Edward John Smith, bandleader Wally Hartley, and passengers Margaret "Molly" Brown and Lady Duff Gordon.

While there's information on many aspects of the story, the book doesn't lose sight of its main point—the causes and effects of the crash. In addition to the kid-friendly explanations throughout, there's a short but effective reference section in the back with an index and glossary.

Parents will love how the book visually keeps kids' attention. Teachers will love how the crowded but clear page layouts give readers a thorough understanding of the information. Kids will love the book's added bonuses: a fold out diagram of the ship and a poster.

Titanic: Disaster at Sea is full of information and images that fuel the imagination. This artfully rendered historical record will captivate inquisitive readers of all ages.

Melissa Anne Wuske