

Titanic: Relative Fate

V. C. King

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iUniverse (October 2009)

Softcover \$13.95 (221pp)

978-1-935278-68-9

Nearly a century after the tragic sinking of the *Titanic*, there remains a certain fascination and sense of disbelief that a horror of such magnitude could, and did, happen. Since the massive loss of life that cold April night in 1912, numerous safeguards have been put in place in order to avoid a recurrence of such disaster.

In *Titanic: Relative Fate*, shipbuilder Abram Harwood has no reason to doubt that *Titan's Sister*, a modernized replica of the doomed *Titanic*, can easily avoid the same fate. After all, he supervised the team that welded her together himself. Yet it isn't long before he starts to question the wisdom of revisiting the catastrophic past. Between the aggressive enthusiasm of the ship's owner, a suspicious death, and a fire that leaves Abram injured, the future of *Titan's Sister* begins to appear ominous indeed. Abram's frustration is compounded when he encounters a ghostly man in old-fashioned clothing and the police embark on an investigation into the events related to the launching of *Titan's Sister*.

In defiance of the portentous happenings, Abram books passage for himself and his father on the ship's maiden voyage. They are joined by Melika Jones, a detective Abram has been casually dating since they met during the police investigation. The ensuing journey leads to more mysteries, both criminal and paranormal in nature, and the plot gathers momentum as it moves toward a gripping conclusion which eerily echoes the past.

V.C. King, author of *Seven Sexy Tales of Terror*, has crafted an interesting novel that combines mystery and suspense with a touch of romance and the paranormal. Her knowledge of ships, and the *Titanic* in particular, is impressive, as is her flair for creating a literary atmosphere capable of drawing the reader into both her story and the underlying tragedy of the *Titanic*. "Tiny vessels, each with a lantern at the bow...carrying the burden for those who couldn't help asking why and what if? Victims of tragedy, taking with them the guilt of those who had survived. Leaving the past to finally rest in peace," King writes.

While King's novel is well-written and evenly paced with most characters aptly drawn, a few threads are left hanging and she stumbles with the character of Melika. In addition to a questionable depiction of police procedure (Melika removes evidence from a body and steals a book from a suspect), the character is portrayed as a hardened and haunted cop who's learned to be tough to survive. Unfortunately, she comes across as just a bit too harsh, rude, and unfeeling. Readers may be baffled by Abram's attraction to her and by the time she changes her tune, they may simply find her too unlikable to care.

Titanic: Relative Fate will interest anyone with even a passing interest in the legendary ship and the tragedy that befell her. The novel is thought-provoking and engrossing, with a stirring poignancy drawn from a tragedy of our past.

(January 20, 2010)

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