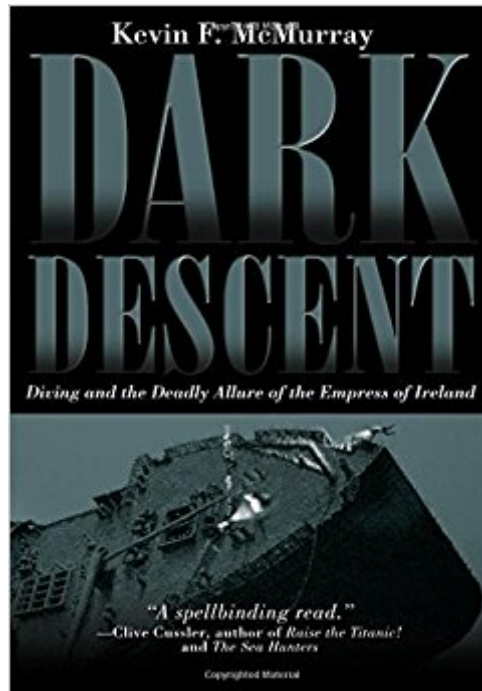


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Dark Descent: Diving And The Deadly Allure Of The Empress Of Ireland



Synopsis

"Dark Descent makes the reader a vicarious participant in what is a very extreme sport." — Philadelphia Inquirer On May 29, 1914, the passenger liner Empress of Ireland was struck by the freighter Storstad and sank in fifteen minutes, taking more than 1,000 victims with her. It remains one of the largest losses of life ever in a maritime accident. At more than a hundred feet deep in the frigid Gulf of St. Lawrence, diving the Empress is like trying to navigate an unfamiliar sixty-story building lying on its side at a forty-five-degree angle, in pitch blackness with only a flashlight. In Dark Descent, Kevin McMurray takes us deep into the bowels of the lost ship, first to relive her tragic death and then to join the divers who have probed the wreck's secrets. It's an adventure from which some divers don't return. "Impressively researched. . . . For those who love the lure of the deep water and the mysteries of shipwrecks, this specialized history will be a pleasure." — Publishers Weekly "Kevin has a remarkable knack of adding life and realism. A great job." — R. W. Hamilton, Chairman of the Board, Divers Alert Network

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author of 2001's Deep Descent recounts the sinking of the Canadian ocean liner Empress of Ireland and documents its subsequent romantic history as a lure for scuba divers in this well-researched but narrowly focused book. Early on the morning of May 29, 1914, the Empress was caught in a thick fog in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and was hit by a Norwegian collier that tore open the hull around its boiler room. The ship went down in about 14 minutes, killing two-thirds of its

1,475 travelers. Many of them were lost in the darkness below deck; some tried to squeeze out of portholes only to get stuck; others died of hypothermia in the freezing water. Like the Titanic, the Empress was a luxury liner, with first class cabins decorated with cherry wood and mahogany. And the combination of its dramatic sinking, its rich construction and its location just a few hundred feet below the surface made it a tantalizing destination for "extreme divers" willing to brave the strong currents and frigid temperatures of the area. McMurray himself made his first dive to the wreck in 1971, and his book focuses primarily on the equipment, techniques and dangers of diving to the ship's remains. His history of the 1914 crash takes little more than 30 pages; probably a good choice since his prose tends to get duller the further away he moves from blow-by-blow explanations of underwater expeditions. The book is impressively researched, however, and, for those who love the lure of the deep water and the mysteries of shipwrecks, this specialized history will be a pleasure. 75 photos and illus. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Dark Descent is a spellbinding read that perfectly describes the nightmarish conditions of diving on the wreck that remains a tomb of its victims." - Clive Cussler, author, Raise the Titanic!, The Sea Hunters, and Trojan Odyssey."

If your a diver and/or shipwreck enthusiast then you will enjoy this book! The book is written as though you were diving with the team while the author presents historical background to enrich the journey. Not much is heard of the Empress of Ireland today, which is a shame, but this book will help you remember the grand lady and experience what I'd like to dive her. A great read!

If you are a diver, and especially a technical or wreck diver, this book will hook you right from the beginning! You won't be able to put it down. You will hear the noises of the regulators, feel the weight of the equipment, the rolling of the boats, feel the pressure and cold of the water. Well written and it shows the dedication and passion for the wreck the author has.

Great book I like this authors writing style and the fact that it is non fiction

not his best work good as a documentaryHis drama as told on the Andria Doria is better

Great book! Captures the allure of deep shipwrecks.

Absolutely amazing story told in good detail. However, the author does go off on some overly detailed explanations of people and things in the book. If it is true I now know a great deal about the nature of lightning.

Nice book, though the author writes many histories with only the wreck as thread.

I first learned about the "Empress of Ireland" disaster through Clive Cussler's book "Night Probe!" I eventually found out more about the vessel and her untimely end. The history is well-documented here by McMurray. Outbound in the St. Lawrence River, the Empress is badly holed by a fully-loaded collier and sinks within 15 minutes, killing more than a thousand. This disaster was generally overshadowed by the outbreak of World War I and the ship was largely forgotten. But once she was found, she became a magnet for the curious and those with ulterior motives. Much like what happened to the Titanic, the Empress has been stripped of much of her gear, her inner treasures, and sadly some of her bodies. A section of the "boneyard" has reportedly been plundered by some rather morbid and sick-minded individuals. McMurray goes into great detail on the many expeditions and dives, the work by some to protect the wreck and what has been found, as well as those who've lost their lives diving on her. While the Empress may be in the St. Lawrence, it's a dive for only the best, as this book carefully explains. This is probably the most comprehensive history of the Empress of Ireland and updates all that has happened since she went down in May 1914. It is at times dense and a slow read, but you can't take away its entertaining, yet sobering qualities.

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