

Wolf, Allan. *The Watch That Ends The Night: Voices From The Titanic*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2011. Print.

If you are searching for a way to mark April 14, 2012, the 100th anniversary of the RMS Titanic's striking of the iceberg, consider settling into a comfortable chair with *The Watch That Ends The Night: Voices From The Titanic*. You may wish to choose a chair with secure footing on solid ground.

Formally, *The Watch That Ends The Night* is a novel consisting of poems, primarily in free verse, along with a variety of other styles suiting the two dozen "voices" who tell the story. This book stands out in large part thanks to Wolf's resonant crafting of these voices. We hear from the crew, including an engine room man, a violinist, and the Captain himself. We hear from a range of passengers, including some of the richest and some of the poorest. We hear from men working in the aftermath of the collision, including a sailor on board the RMS Carpathia, the ship that rescued the Titanic's survivors. The observations of a Nova Scotian undertaker, tasked with cataloguing the bodies and effects of the dead, are interspersed throughout, providing suspense despite the familiarity of the narrative. We read the wireless transmissions, most of which, Wolf mentions, are real: "From: RMS *Titanic*. To: All Ships at Sea. [...] I require immediate assistance".

Wolf enriches the reader's experience further by giving voice to the ominous perspective of the iceberg: "The lookouts on her mast can't make me out". Even "The Ship Rat" appears, scurrying along on a quest for survival whose symbolic importance increases as events unfold.

Taken individually, each poem is an engaging insight into a particular perspective at a given moment within the voyage. Taken as a whole, Wolf's poems build the tension that befits this story while capturing the stratification and diversity that existed on the ship in its time.

The back matter is wonderful. Wolf provides details on each character and clarifies what is fact and what is fiction. There is also an extensive bibliography.

The Watch That Ends The Night: Voices From The Titanic has many potential classroom applications. Hopefully, many young adult and adult readers will also read it purely for enjoyment.

Highly recommended: 4 out of 4 stars
Reviewer: Sarah Polkinghorne