

BOOK CLUB GUIDE

Bestselling Author of *When the World Fell Silent*

DONNA JONES ALWARD

A NOVEL OF THE
TITANIC



**SHIP OF
DREAMS**



Thank you so much for choosing SHIP OF DREAMS for your book club! I'm truly honoured and hope you all enjoy the book, set aboard the glamorous and fated *Titanic*. I truly fell in love with Hannah and Louisa, and I hope you do, too.

You can use this little guide to help plan your book club event - you'll find an extra copy of the Book Club Questions from the back of the book, as well as some entertaining ideas and a suggested reading list if you're keen to read more fiction and non-fiction about the *Titanic* disaster, as well as Halifax's role in the aftermath.

I would love to see any pictures you have of the event, and you can forward them to me at donna@donnaalward.com.

If you would like signed bookplates for your books, please email me - I'm happy to send some along to your group. Occasionally I have other swag as well, so let me know your numbers and I'll pop some surprises in the mail.

Happy reading!

Donna



ENTERTAINING IDEAS

DECOR

There were tons of fresh flowers on the Titanic - to mask the smell of fresh paint! Add a pretty bouquet or two to liven the atmosphere.

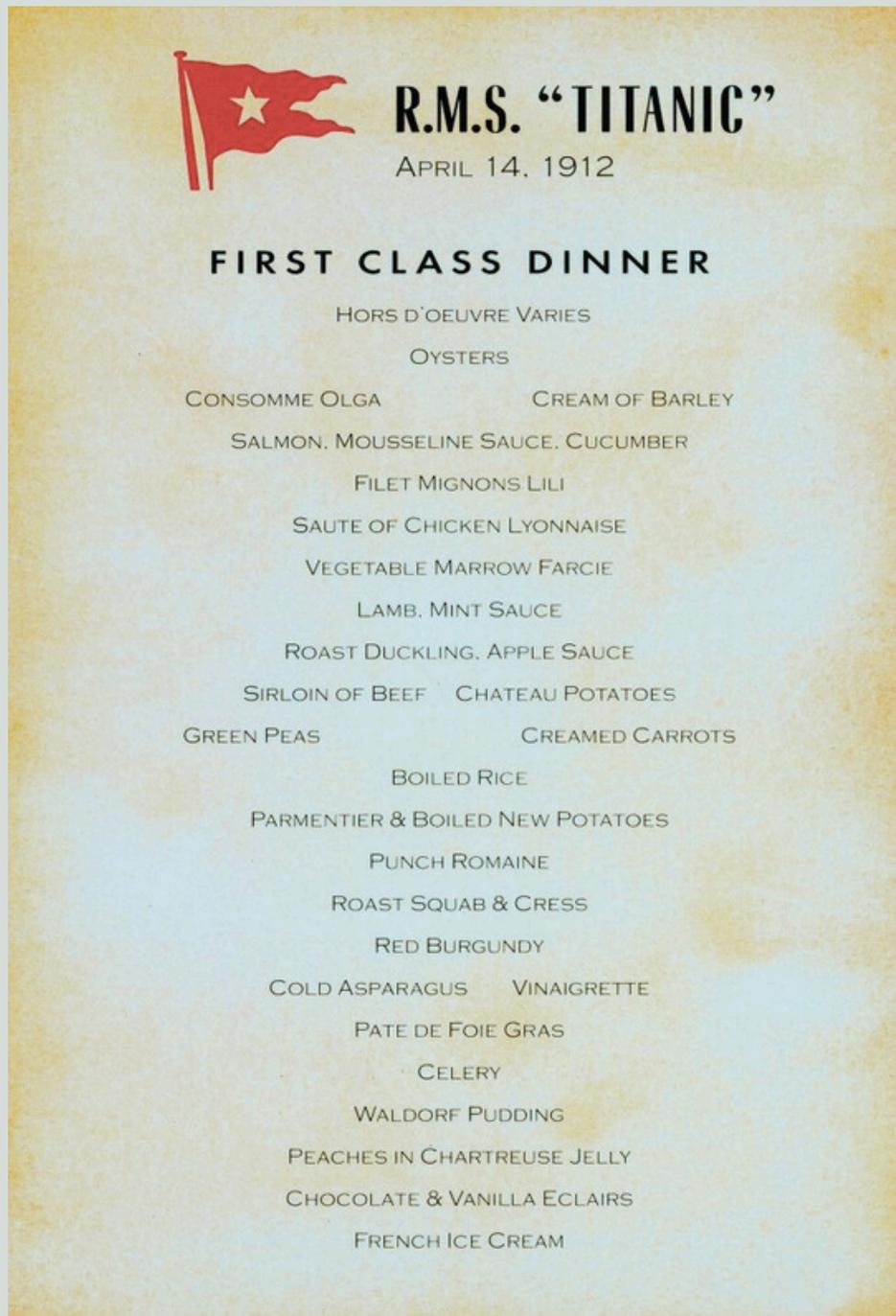
There are also some fabulous items on sites like Etsy that you can order to add a real sense of high-seas occasion! Look for White Star Line napkins, customizable menus, even tickets for your guests! Don't forget pretty dishes and tablecloths - even the lower classes traveled in elevated style.

FOOD AND DRINK

You can have a lot of fun here! Perhaps you want to serve a first-class tea as Hannah and Lou might have had in the Reception Room. Finger sandwiches, scones with jam and clotted cream, tarts and petit-fours, along with tea or a glass of something fizzy fits the bill!

Cocktails before dinner? Whip up some drinks popular in 1912: Punch Romaine, Sidecars, Martinis, Robert Burns, or Knickerbockers.

If you're looking to serve a meal, there's no need to toil over ten courses! Try a soup, a main and vegetable, and a dessert, perhaps from the menu that was served on April 14 - the night the ship hit the iceberg. French Ice Cream, by the way, was reserved for first class, as it included egg yolks, giving it the rich colour and flavour.



PLAY A ROLE

Want to really get into the spirit? Give everyone a place card with a character - either from the book or from the passenger list! Include details about each person, and have them stay in character throughout the meal.

DRESS THE PART

1912 fashions were late Edwardian and just starting to evolve into slimmer silhouettes with designers like Paul Poiret and Lady Duff-Gordon. Large hats, gloves, day suits and skirts and lace blouses were the order of the day. Don't forget the jewels - though costume is certainly fine. Whatever type of theme excites you, go for it!

MUSIC

Don't forget the ambience created by music! There were eight musicians on board, and trios or a quintet would play after dinner or outside the dining room. Create a playlist on YouTube by doing a search for Titanic music, and really set the scene.

And most of all - have FUN.

READING GUIDE QUESTIONS

- 1) SHIP OF DREAMS is set on the iconic Titanic. Did you know a lot about the tragedy before you read the book? How true do you feel the author was to the time period?
- 2) Hannah and Louisa are best friends, yet they are very different women. Do you think their personalities complemented each other? Which character did you relate to more, and why?
- 3) Both Hannah and Louisa are keeping a secret from the other. How do you feel about secrets? Are people entitled to their own secrets, or is honesty really the best policy?
- 4) Do you think Hannah has a right to feel betrayed when she discovers the truth about Louisa? Do you think Louisa is in the wrong?
- 5) The characters in Ship of Dreams experience trauma from the sinking. What do you think about the way Hannah and Lou responded to that trauma? Did anything surprise you?
- 6) In addition to themes of secrets and betrayal and friendship, there's also an underlying theme of women helping other women. We see this in characters like Margaret Brown, Helen Churchill Candee, Mabel Fortune, Renee Harris, and the fictional Mrs. Porter. What are your thoughts on this theme, and how might this idea play out in today's world?
- 7) Many of the women in the story were outliers, trailblazers, and in some cases, troublemakers. How much did you know about the women's movement in the early 20th century? Can you think of other women doing the same thing today?
- 8) Hannah and Louisa find different ways of coping with their grief. Why do you think Hannah's feelings were so different from Louisa's? What did you think of their decisions in the end?

READING AND RESOURCE GUIDE



These are just a few of the books I found particularly interesting as I researched and explored this event:

Fiction:

Women and Children First - Gill Paul

Unsinkable - Jenni Walsh

The Second Mrs Astor - Shana Abe

Non Fiction:

Titanic Remembered - Alan Ruffman

Titanic Victims in Halifax Graveyards - Blair Beed

Titanic Style - Grace Evans

Titanic: True Stories of the Passengers, Crew, and Legacy -

Nicola Pierce

Halifax and Titanic - John Boileau

