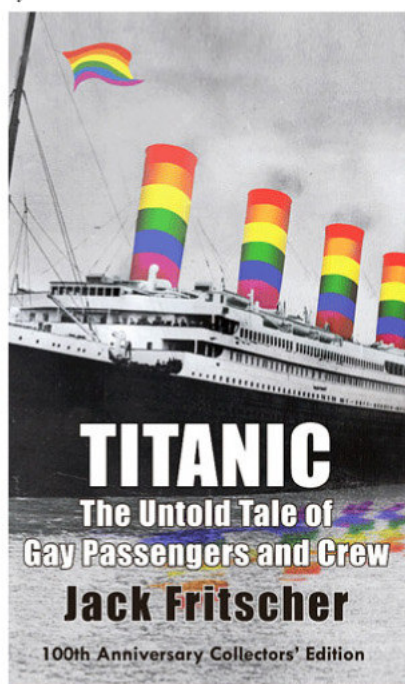


That sinking feeling

Out There

by Roberto Friedman

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T

Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. We'd say it does *Titanic* lore proud. Meantime, if you're the type who loves to do artsy-craftsy things, then Taschen has just the book for you: *Build Your Own Titanic*, a do-it-yourself model kit in the form of a softcover book (\$14.99). "Calling all Titanic buffs, hobbyists, and ship-lovers," says the ad copy: "You're invited to build a cardboard model of the formidable and notorious vessel!"

"Vast sums of money have been spent and enormous efforts have been made in order to explore the wreck, now lying 12,000 feet under the sea. However, if you are a *Titanic* enthusiast and enjoy making things with your hands, then there is a far less troublesome alternative that will allow you to explore the ship in detail: a 1:200 cardboard model measuring 135 cm/53 inches (don't worry, it has pre-cut components and comes with detailed instructions)." We've heard *that* before. Still, the toy ship does look *tres formidable*. You could say she's this year's model.

This weekend, the 100th anniversary of the fate of that little toy boat called the *Titanic* is set to sweep American media culture. On movie screens, bloviating director **James Cameron's** *Titanic* returns in 3D. On TV screens, writer **Julian Fellowes** moves his *Downton Abbey* to *Titanic*, the high-end, four-part ABC miniseries.

This Sunday, April 15, also marks the publication of *Titanic: The Untold Tale of Gay Passengers and Crew, 100th Anniversary Collectors' Edition* (Palm Drive Publishing, paperback & e-book), literary erotica by author and editor **Jack Fritscher**. "For a number of years, I have been planning on this 100th Anniversary to publish my short novel which reclaims and transforms *Titanic* history because, in all the *Titanic* stories told as far as I know, that history has always been straight," said Fritscher. "Although nothing in the text makes the connection, I was personally impelled to write the novel years ago, in 1986, as a subtle parable of us gay people struggling to save ourselves during the onslaught of HIV."

"In movie-newsreel footage shot three days later on the deck of the rescue ship *Carpathia* immediately after it docked in New York, a dozen of the surviving *Titanic* crew, mostly sailor lads in tight white pants hiding little, showing lots, can be seen in very intimate horseplay, camping around, and posing in life jackets, pretending to faint. Of the 885 male crew on *Titanic*, 693 (or 78%) died. Altogether, 1,352 men perished. If, according to Kinsey, one out of six ordinary men is gay, then 225 gay men died. If two out of six in the travel industry are gay, 450 gay men died, making the *Titanic* an overlooked but essential chapter in gay history."

Here's more, from publisher **Mark Henry**'s preface to the book.

"Breaking the straight trance of received *Titanic* history, San Francisco author Jack Fritscher reclaims gay history by writing a pitch-perfect sex epic of gay survival. *Titanic* outs the forbidden gay love story of the world's most famous cruise, featuring the **Unsinkable Molly Brown**, the posh lovers **Michael Whitney** and **Edward Wedding**, and the working crew including the rugged **Balkan Stoker**, the redheaded Royal Purser **Felix Jones**, and the ship's second carpenter **Michael Brice** and Third Officer **Sam Maxwell**.

"*Titanic* was first published in *Honcho* magazine (1988), where it was reader-tested as a serial novel nine years before James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997), and 24 years before Julian Fellowes of *Downton Abbey* filmed his own *Titanic* (2012). It's available in trade paperback (\$9.95), Kindle or Nook edition (\$2.99). The e-book has active links to YouTube footage of *Titanic* survivors and crew 'camping about' on the rescue ship *Carpathia* immediately after docking at Chelsea Piers in New York."

Fritscher designed the book's cover, seen here, as an homage to the huge rainbow scarf trailing from the roof of the bus in

